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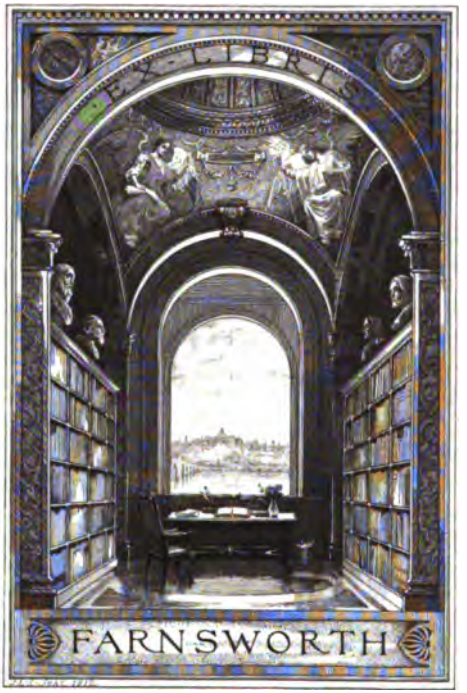
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THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII

BY

EDWARD BULWER LYTTON
(LORD LYTTON)

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I.



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON
ESTES AND LAURIAT
1891

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

THE publishers desire to call attention to the fact that the illustrations of Pompeian ruins given in this edition are from actual photographs taken on the spot.

The views in many cases were indicated by them in person in Pompeii, and were photographed especially for them by one of the leading photographers of Italy. They also take this opportunity of acknowledging their indebtedness to FRANKLIN W. SMITH, Esq., for his valuable assistance in the illustrating of this edition.

The interiors of a Pompeian house herein given are reproduced from photographs of the interior of the Pompeia, a building erected in Saratoga, N. Y., by Mr. Smith, which is as nearly as possible an exact fac-simile of the house of Pansa as described by Bulwer. The interior is elaborately decorated after careful study of Pompeian literature and art by the well known French artist Pascal and others.

BOSTON, June, 1891.

TO SIR WILLIAM GELL,

ETC., ETC.

DEAR SIR, — In publishing a work, of which Pompeii furnishes the subject, I can think of no one to whom it can so fitly be dedicated as yourself. Your charming volumes upon the antiquities of that city have indissolubly connected your name with its earlier (as your residence in the vicinity has identified you with its more recent) associations.

Ere you receive these volumes, I hope to be deep in the perusal of your forthcoming work upon "The Topography of Rome and its Vicinity." The glance at its contents which you permitted me at Naples sufficed to convince me of its interest and value; and as an Englishman, and as one who has loitered under the Portico, I rejoice to think that, in adding largely to your own reputation, you will also renovate our country's claim to eminence in those departments of learning in which of late years we have but feebly supported our ancient reputation. Venturing thus a prediction of the success of your work, it would be a little superfluous to express a wish for the accomplishment of the prophecy! But I may add a more general hope, that you will long have leisure and inclination for those literary pursuits to which you bring an erudition so extensive; and that they may continue, as now, sometimes to beguile you from yourself, and never to divert you from your friends.

I have the honor to be, dear sir, very faithfully yours,

THE AUTHOR.

LEAMINGTON,
September 21, 1834.

PREFACE

TO THE FIRST EDITION, 1834.

On visiting those disinterred remains of an ancient city which, more perhaps than either the delicious breeze or the cloudless sun, the violet valleys and orange-groves of the South, attract the traveller to the neighborhood of Naples; on viewing, still fresh and vivid, the houses, the streets, the temples, the theatres, of a place existing in the haughtiest age of the Roman Empire, — it was not unnatural, perhaps, that a writer who had before labored, however unworthily, in the art to revive and to create, should feel a keen desire to people once more those deserted streets, to repair those graceful ruins, to reanimate the bones which were yet spared to his survey, to traverse the gulf of eighteen centuries, and to wake to a second existence — the City of the Dead!

And the reader will easily imagine how sensibly this desire grew upon one whose task was undertaken in the immediate neighborhood of Pompeii, — the sea that once bore her commerce, and received her fugitives, at his feet, and the fatal mountain of Vesuvius, still breathing forth smoke and fire, constantly before his eyes![1]

I was aware from the first, however, of the great difficulties with which I had to contend. To paint the manners and exhibit the life of the Middle Ages required the hand of a master genius; yet perhaps that task was slight and

[1] Nearly the whole of this work was written at Naples last winter (1832–33).

easy in comparison with the attempt to portray a far earlier and more unfamiliar period. With the men and customs of the feudal time we have a natural sympathy and bond of alliance: those men were our own ancestors; from those customs we received our own; the creed of our chivalric fathers is still ours, their tombs yet consecrate our churches, the ruins of their castles yet frown over our valleys; we trace in their struggles for liberty and for justice our present institutions; and in the elements of their social state we behold the origin of our own.

But with the classical age we have no household and familiar associations. The creed of that departed religion, the customs of that past civilization, present little that is sacred or attractive to our northern imaginations; they are rendered yet more trite to us by the scholastic pedantries which first acquainted us with their natures, and are linked with the recollection of studies which were imposed as a labor, and not cultivated as a delight.

Yet the enterprise, though arduous, seemed to me worth attempting; and in the time and the scene I have chosen, much may be found to arouse the curiosity of the reader, and enlist his interest in the descriptions of the author. It was the first century of our religion; it was the most civilized period of Rome; the conduct of the story lies amidst places whose relics we yet trace; the catastrophe is among the most awful which the tragedies of ancient history present to our survey.

From the ample materials before me, my endeavor has been to select those which would be most attractive to a modern reader, — the customs and superstitions least unfamiliar to him; the shadows that, when reanimated, would present to him such images as, while they represented the past, might be least uninteresting to the speculations of the present. It did indeed require a greater self-control than the reader may at first imagine, to reject much that was

most inviting in itself, but which, while it might have added attraction to parts of the work, would have been injurious to the symmetry of the whole. Thus, for instance, the date of my story is that of the short reign of Titus, when Rome was at its proudest and most gigantic eminence of luxury and power. It was therefore a most inviting temptation to the Author to conduct the characters of his tale, during the progress of its incidents, from Pompeii to Rome. What could afford such materials for description, or such field for the vanity of display, as that gorgeous city of the world, whose grandeur could lend so bright an inspiration to fancy, so favorable and so solemn a dignity to research? But in choosing for my subject, my catastrophe, the Destruction of Pompeii, it required but little insight into the higher principles of art to perceive that to Pompeii the story should be rigidly confined.

Placed in contrast with the mighty pomp of Rome, the luxuries and gaud of the vivid Campanian city would have sunk into insignificance. Her awful fate would have seemed but a petty and isolated wreck in the vast seas of the imperial sway, and the auxiliary I should have summoned to the interest of my story would only have destroyed and overpowered the cause it was invoked to support. I was therefore compelled to relinquish an episodical excursion so alluring in itself, and confining my story strictly to Pompeii, to leave to others the honor of delineating the hollow but majestic civilization of Rome.

The city whose fate supplied me with so superb and awful a catastrophe, supplied easily from the first survey of its remains the characters most suited to the subject and the scene: the half-Grecian colony of Hercules, mingling with the manners of Italy so much of the costumes of Hellas, suggested of itself the characters of Glaucus and Ione. The worship of Isis, its existent fane, with its false oracles unveiled, the trade of Pompeii with Alexandria,

the associations of the Sarnus with the Nile, called forth the Egyptian Arbaces, the base Calenus, and the fervent Apæcides. The early struggles of Christianity with the heathen superstition suggested the creation of Olinthus; and the burnt fields of Campania, long celebrated for the spells of the sorceress, naturally produced the Saga of Vesuvius. For the existence of the Blind Girl, I am indebted to a casual conversation with a gentleman well known amongst the English at Naples for his general knowledge of the many paths of life. Speaking of the utter darkness which accompanied the first recorded eruption of Vesuvius, and the additional obstacle it presented to the escape of the inhabitants, he observed that the blind would be the most favored in such a moment, and find the easiest deliverance. In this remark originated the creation of Nydia.

The characters, therefore, are the natural offspring of the scene and time. The incidents of the tale are equally consonant, perhaps, to the then existent society; for it is not only the ordinary habits of life, the feasts and the forum, the baths and the amphitheatre, the commonplace routine of the classic luxury, which we recall the past to behold; equally important, and more deeply interesting, are the passions, the crimes, the misfortunes, and reverses that might have chanced to the shades we thus summon to life! We understand any epoch of the world but ill if we do not examine its romance. There is as much truth in the poetry of life as in its prose.

As the greatest difficulty in treating of an unfamiliar and distant period is to make the characters introduced "live and move" before the eye of the reader, so such should doubtless be the first object of a work of the present description; and all attempts at the display of learning should be considered but as means subservient to this, the main requisite of fiction. The first art of the Poet (the creator) is to breathe the breath of life into his creatures; the next is to make their words and



actions appropriate to the era in which they are to speak and act. This last art is, perhaps, the better effected by not bringing the art itself constantly before the reader; by not crowding the page with quotations and the margin with notes. The intuitive spirit which infuses antiquity into ancient images is perhaps the true learning which a work of this nature requires: without it, pedantry is offensive; with it, useless. No man who is thoroughly aware of what Prose Fiction has now become — of its dignity, of its influence, of the manner in which it has gradually absorbed all similar departments of literature, of its power in teaching as well as amusing — can so far forget its connection with History, with Philosophy, with Politics, its utter harmony with Poetry and obedience to Truth, as to debase its nature to the level of scholastic frivolities: he raises scholarship to the creative, and does not bow the creative to the scholastic.

With respect to the language used by the characters introduced, I have studied carefully to avoid what has always seemed to me a fatal error in those who have attempted in modern times to introduce the beings of a classical age.[1]

[1] What the strong common sense of Sir Walter Scott has expressed so well in his preface to "Ivanhoe" (1st edition). appears to me at least as applicable to a writer who draws from classical as to one who borrows from feudal antiquity. Let me avail myself of the words I refer to, and humbly and reverently appropriate them for the moment: "It is true that I neither can, nor do pretend, to the observation [observance?] of complete accuracy even in matters of outward costume, much less in the more important points of language and manners. But the same motive which prevents my writing the dialogue of the piece in Anglo-Saxon, or in Norman-French [*in Latin or in Greek*], and which prohibits my sending forth this essay printed with the types of Caxton or Wynken de Worde [*written with a reed upon five rolls of parchment, fastened to a cylinder, and adorned with a boss*], prevents my attempting to confine myself within the limits of the period to which my story is laid. It is necessary, for exciting interest of any kind, that the subject assumed should be, as it were, *translated* into the manners as well as the language of the age we live in.

.

"In point of justice, therefore, to the multitudes who will, I trust, devour this book with avidity [*hem!*], I have so far explained ancient manners in

Authors have mostly given to them the stilted sentences, the cold and didactic solemnities of language which they find in the more admired of the classical writers. It is an error as absurd to make Romans in common life talk in the periods of Cicero, as it would be in a novelist to endow his English personages with the long-drawn sentences of Johnson or Burke. The fault is the greater, because, while it pretends to learning, it betrays in reality the ignorance of just criticism; it fatigues, it wearies, it revolts; and we have not the satisfaction, in yawning, to think that we yawn eruditely. To impart anything like fidelity to the dialogues of classic actors, we must beware (to use a university phrase) how we "*cram*" for the occasion! Nothing can give to a writer a more stiff and uneasy gait than the sudden and hasty adoption of the toga. We must bring to our task the familiarized knowledge of many years; the allusions, the phraseology, the language generally, must flow from a stream that has long been full; the flowers must be transplanted from a living soil, and not bought secondhand at the nearest market-place. This advantage — which is, in fact, only that of familiarity with our subject — is one derived rather from accident than merit, and depends upon the degree in which the classics have entered into the education of our youth and the studies of our maturity. Yet, even did a writer possess the utmost advantage of this nature which education and study can

modern language, and so far detailed the characters and sentiments of my persons, that the modern reader will not find himself, I should hope, much trammelled by the repulsive dryness of mere antiquity. In this, I respectfully contend, I have in no respect exceeded the fair license due to the author of a fictitious composition.

.

"It is true," proceeds my authority, "that this license is confined within legitimate bounds; the author must introduce nothing inconsistent with the manners of the age." — *Preface to "Ivanhoe."*

I can add nothing to these judicious and discriminating remarks; they form the canons of true criticism, by which all fiction that portrays the past should be judged.

bestow, it might be scarcely possible so entirely to transport himself to an age so different from his own, but that he would incur some inaccuracies, some errors of inadvertence or forgetfulness. And when, in works upon the manners of the ancients — works even of the gravest character, composed by the profoundest scholars — some such imperfections will often be discovered, even by a critic in comparison but superficially informed, it would be far too presumptuous in me to hope that I have been more fortunate than men infinitely more learned, in a work in which learning is infinitely less required. It is for this reason that I venture to believe that scholars themselves will be the most lenient of my judges. Enough if this book, whatever its imperfections, should be found a portrait — unskilful, perhaps, in coloring, faulty in drawing, but not altogether unfaithful to the features and the costume of the age which I have attempted to paint. May it be (what is far more important) a just representation of the human passions and the human heart, whose elements in all ages are the same!

PREFACE

TO THE EDITION OF 1850.

THIS work has had the good fortune to be so general a favorite with the Public, that the Author is spared the task of obtruding any comments in its vindication from adverse criticism. The profound scholarship of German criticism, which has given so minute an attention to the domestic life of the ancients, has sufficiently testified to the general fidelity with which the manners, habits, and customs of the inhabitants of Pompeii have been described in these pages. And

writing the work almost on the spot, and amidst a population that still preserve a strong family likeness to their classic forefathers, I could scarcely fail to catch something of those living colors which mere book-study alone would not have sufficed to bestow. It is, I suspect, to this accidental advantage that this work is principally indebted for a greater popularity than has hitherto attended the attempts of scholars to create an interest, by fictitious narrative, in the manners and persons of a classic age. Perhaps, too, the writers I allude to, and of whose labors I would speak with the highest respect, did not sufficiently remember that in works of imagination the description of manners, however important as an accessory, must still be subordinate to the vital elements of interest; namely, plot, character, and passion. And in reviving the ancient shadows they have rather sought occasion to display erudition than to show how the human heart beats the same, whether under the Grecian tunic or the Roman toga. It is this, indeed, which distinguishes the imitators of classic learning from the classic literature itself. For in classic literature there is no want of movement and passion, — of all the more animated elements of what we now call Romance. Indeed, romance itself, as we take it from the Middle Ages, owes much to Grecian fable. Many of the adventures of knight-errantry are borrowed either from the trials of Ulysses or the achievements of Theseus. And while Homer, yet unrestored to his throne among the poets, was only known to the literature of early chivalry in a spurious or grotesque form, the genius of Gothic fiction was constructing many a tale for Northern wonder from the mutilated fragments of the divine old tale-teller.

Amongst these losses of the past which we have most to deplore are the old novels or romances for which Miletus was famous. But, judging from all else of Greek literature that is left to us, there can be little doubt that they were well

fitted to sustain the attention of lively and impatient audiences by the same arts which are necessary to the modern tale-teller: that they could not have failed in variety of incident and surprises of ingenious fancy; in the contrasts of character; and least of all in the delineations of the tender passion, which, however modified in its expression by differences of national habits, forms the main subject of human interest in all the multiform varieties of fictitious narrative, — from the Chinese to the Arab, from the Arab to the Scandinavian,— and which at this day animates the tale of many an itinerant Boccaccio, gathering his spell-bound listeners round him, on sunny evenings, by the Sicilian seas.

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THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

BOOK I.

Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere; et
Quem Fors dierum cumque dabit, lucro
Adpone; nec dulces amores
Sperne, puer, neque tu choreas.
HOR. lib. i. od. ix.

The future in the morrow shun to seek;
Each day that Fate shall give thee, count as gain;
Nor spurn, O youth, sweet loves,
Nor choral dance and song.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF POMPEII.

"Ho, Diomed, well met! Do you sup with Glaucus to-night?" said a young man of small stature, who wore his tunic in those loose and effeminate folds which proved him to be a gentleman and a coxcomb.

"Alas, no! dear Clodius; he has not invited me," replied Diomed, a man of portly frame and of middle age. "By Pollux, a scurvy trick! for they say his suppers are the best in Pompeii."

"Pretty well; though there is never enough of wine for me. It is not the old Greek blood that flows in his veins, for he pretends that wine makes him dull the next morning."

"There may be another reason for that thrift," said Diomed, raising his brows. "With all his conceit and extravagance he is not so rich, I fancy, as he affects to be, and perhaps loves to save his amphoræ better than his wit."

"An additional reason for supping with him while the sesterces last. Next year, Diomed, we must find another Glaucus."

"He is fond of the dice, too, I hear."

"He is fond of every pleasure; and while he likes the pleasure of giving suppers, we are all fond of *him*."

"Ha, ha, Clodius, that is well said! Have you ever seen my wine-cellars, by the bye?"

"I think not, my good Diomed."

"Well, you must sup with me some evening; I have tolerable murænæ [1] in my reservoir, and I will ask Pansa the ædile to meet you."

"Oh, no state with me! *Persicos odi apparatus*, I am easily contented. Well, the day wanes; I am for the baths — and you —"

"To the quæstor — business of state — afterwards to the temple of Isis. *Vale!*"

"An ostentatious, bustling, ill-bred fellow," muttered Clodius to himself, as he sauntered slowly away. "He thinks with his feasts and his wine-cellars to make us forget that he is the son of a freedman; and so he will, when we do him the honor of winning his money: these rich plebeians are a harvest for us spendthrift nobles."

Thus soliloquizing, Clodius arrived in the Via Domitiana, which was crowded with passengers and chariots, and exhibited all that gay and animated exuberance of life and motion which we find at this day in the streets of Naples.

The bells of the cars, as they rapidly glided by each other, jingled merrily on the ear, and Clodius, with smiles or nods, claimed familiar acquaintance with whatever equipage was most elegant or fantastic; in fact, no idler was better known in Pompeii.

"What, Clodius! and how have you slept on your good fortune?" cried, in a pleasant and musical voice, a young man in a chariot of the most fastidious and graceful fashion. Upon its surface of bronze were elaborately wrought, in the still exquisite workmanship of Greece, reliefs of the Olympian games; the two horses that drew the car were of the rarest

[1] *Murænæ*, — lampreys.

breed of Parthia; their slender limbs seemed to disdain the ground and court the air, and yet at the slightest touch of the charioteer, who stood behind the young owner of the equipage, they paused, motionless, as if suddenly transformed into stone, — lifeless, but lifelike, as one of the breathing wonders of Praxiteles. The owner himself was of that slender and beautiful symmetry from which the sculptors of Athens drew their models; his Grecian origin betrayed itself in his light but clustering locks and the perfect harmony of his features. He wore no toga, which in the time of the emperors had indeed ceased to be the general distinction of the Romans and was especially ridiculed by the pretenders to fashion, but his tunic glowed in the richest hues of the Tyrian dye, and the fibulæ, or buckles, by which it was fastened, sparkled with emeralds; around his neck was a chain of gold, which in the middle of his breast twisted itself into the form of a serpent's head, from the mouth of which hung pendent a large signet ring of elaborate and most exquisite workmanship; the sleeves of the tunic were loose, and fringed at the hand with gold; and across the waist a girdle wrought in arabesque designs, and of the same material as the fringe, served in lieu of pockets for the receptacle of the handkerchief and the purse, the stilus and the tablets.

"My dear Glaucus," said Clodius, "I rejoice to see that your losses have so little affected your mien. Why, you seem as if you had been inspired by Apollo, and your face shines with happiness like a glory; any one might take you for the winner, and me for the loser."

"And what is there in the loss or gain of those dull pieces of metal that should change our spirit, my Clodius? By Venus! while yet young, we can cover our full locks with chaplets; while yet the cithara sounds on unsated ears, while yet the smile of Lydia or of Chloe flashes over our veins in which the blood runs so swiftly, so long shall we find delight in the sunny air, and make bald time itself but the treasurer of our joys. You sup with me to-night, you know."

"Who ever forgets the invitation of Glaucus!"

"But which way go you now?"

"Why, I thought of visiting the baths; but it wants yet an hour to the usual time."

"Well, I will dismiss my chariot and go with you. So, so, my Phylias," stroking the horse nearest to him, which by a low neigh and with backward ears playfully acknowledged the courtesy; "a holiday for you to-day. Is he not handsome, Clodius?

"Worthy of Phœbus," returned the noble parasite, — "or of Glaucus."

CHAPTER II.

THE BLIND FLOWER-GIRL AND THE BEAUTY OF FASHION. — THE ATHENIAN'S CONFESSION. — THE READER'S INTRODUCTION TO ARBACES OF EGYPT.

TALKING lightly on a thousand matters, the two young men sauntered through the streets; they were now in that quarter which was filled with the gayest shops, their open interiors all and each radiant with the gaudy yet harmonious colors of frescos inconceivably varied in fancy and design. The sparkling fountains that at every vista threw upwards their grateful spray in the summer air; the crowd of passengers, or rather loiterers, mostly clad in robes of the Tyrian dye; the gay groups collected round each more attractive shop; the slaves passing to and fro with buckets of bronze, cast in the most graceful shapes, and borne upon their heads; the country girls stationed at frequent intervals with baskets of blushing fruit, and flowers more alluring to the ancient Italians than to their descendants (with whom, indeed, "*latet anguis in herba*," a disease seems lurking in every violet and rose),[1] the numerous haunts which fulfilled with that idle people the office of *cafés* and clubs at this day; the shops, where on shelves of marble were ranged the vases of wine and oil, and before whose thresholds, seats, protected from the sun by a purple awning, invited the weary to rest and the indolent to lounge,

[1] See note (*a*) at the end.

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— made a scene of such glowing and vivacious excitement as might well give the Athenian spirit of Glaucus an excuse for its susceptibility to joy.

"Talk to me no more of Rome," said he to Clodius. "Pleasure is too stately and ponderous in those mighty walls: even in the precincts of the court, even in the Golden House of Nero and the incipient glories of the palace of Titus, there is a certain dulness of magnificence, the eye aches, the spirit is wearied; besides, my Clodius, we are discontented when we compare the enormous luxury and wealth of others with the mediocrity of our own state. But here we surrender ourselves easily to pleasure, and we have the brilliancy of luxury without the lassitude of its pomp."

"It was from that feeling that you chose your summer retreat at Pompeii?"

"It was; I prefer it to Baiæ. I grant the charms of the latter, but I love not the pedants who resort there, and who seem to weigh out their pleasures by the drachm"

"Yet you are fond of the learned, too; and as for poetry, why, your house is literally eloquent with Æschylus and Homer, the epic and the drama."

"Yes, but those Romans who mimic my Athenian ancestors do everything so heavily. Even in the chase they make their slaves carry Plato with them; and whenever the boar is lost, out they take their books and their papyrus, in order not to lose their time too. When the dancing-girls swim before them in all the blandishment of Persian manners, some drone of a freedman, with a face of stone, reads them a section of Cicero *De Officiis*. Unskilful pharmacists! pleasure and study are not elements to be thus mixed together; they must be enjoyed separately: the Romans lose both by this pragmatical affectation of refinement, and prove that they have no souls for either. Oh, my Clodius, how little your countrymen know of the true versatility of a Pericles, of the true witcheries of an Aspasia! It was but the other day that I paid a visit to Pliny; he was sitting in his summer-house writing, while an unfortunate slave played on the tibia. His nephew (oh, whip me such philosophical coxcombs!) was reading Thucydides'

description of the plague, and nodding his conceited little head in time to the music, while his lips were repeating all the loathsome details of that terrible delineation. The puppy saw nothing incongruous in learning at the same time a ditty of love and a description of the plague."

"Why, they *are* much the same thing," said Clodius.

"So I told him, in excuse for his coxcombry; but my youth stared me rebukingly in the face, without taking the jest, and answered that it was only the insensate ear that the music pleased, whereas the book (the description of the plague, mind you!) elevated the heart. 'Ah!' quoth the fat uncle, wheezing, 'my boy is quite an Athenian, always mixing the *utile* with the *dulce*.' O Minerva, how I laughed in my sleeve! While I was there, they came to tell the boy-sophist that his favorite freedman was just dead of a fever. 'Inexorable death!' cried he; 'get me my Horace. How beautifully the sweet poet consoles us for these misfortunes!' Oh, can these men love, my Clodius? Scarcely even with the senses. How rarely a Roman has a heart! He is but the mechanism of genius, — he wants its bones and flesh."

Though Clodius was secretly a little sore at these remarks on his countrymen, he affected to sympathize with his friend, partly because he was by nature a parasite, and partly because it was the fashion among the dissolute young Romans to affect a little contempt for the very birth which in reality made them so arrogant; it was the mode to imitate the Greeks, and yet to laugh at their own clumsy imitation.

Thus conversing, their steps were arrested by a crowd gathered round an open space where three streets met; and, just where the porticos of a light and graceful temple threw their shade, there stood a young girl, with a flower-basket on her right arm, and a small three-stringed instrument of music in the left hand, to whose low and soft tones she was modulating a wild and half-barbaric air. At every pause in the music she gracefully waved her flower-basket round, inviting the loiterers to buy; and many a sesterce was showered into the basket, either in compliment to the music or in compassion to the songstress, — for she was blind.

"It is my poor Thessalian," said Glaucus, stopping; "I have not seen her since my return to Pompeii. Hush! her voice is sweet; let us listen."

THE BLIND FLOWER-GIRL'S SONG.

I.

Buy my flowers — oh, buy, I pray!
The blind girl comes from afar;
If the earth be as fair as I hear them say,
These flowers her children are!
Do they her beauty keep?
They are fresh from her lap, I know;
For I caught them fast asleep
In her arms an hour ago.
With the air which is her breath —
Her soft and delicate breath —
Over them murmuring low!

On their lips her sweet kiss lingers yet,
And their cheeks with her tender tears are wet.
For she weeps — that gentle mother weeps
(As morn and night her watch she keeps,
With a yearning heart and a passionate care)
To see the young things grow so fair;
She weeps — for love she weeps;
And the dews are the tears she weeps
From the well of a mother's love!

II.

Ye have a world of light,
Where love in the loved rejoices;
But the blind girl's home is the House of Night,
And its beings are empty voices.

As one in the realm below,
I stand by the streams of woe!
I hear the vain shadows glide,
I feel their soft breath at my side,
And I thirst the loved forms to see,
And I stretch my fond arms around,
And I catch but a shapeless sound,
For the living are ghosts to me.

Come buy — come buy!
Hark! how the sweet things sigh
(For they have a voice like ours),
"The breath of the blind girl closes
The leaves of the saddening roses —
We are tender, we sons of light,
We shrink from this child of night,
From the grasp of the blind girl free us:
We yearn for the eyes that see us —
We are for night too gay,
In your eyes we behold the day —
Oh, buy — oh, buy the flowers!"

"I must have yon bunch of violets, sweet Nydia," said Glaucus, pressing through the crowd and dropping a handful of small coins into the basket; "your voice is more charming than ever."

The blind girl started forward as she heard the Athenian's voice, then as suddenly paused, while the blood rushed violently over neck, cheek, and temples.

"So you are returned!" said she in a low voice; and then repeated half to herself, "Glaucus is returned!"

"Yes, child, I have not been at Pompeii above a few days. My garden wants your care, as before; you will visit it, I trust, to-morrow. And mind, no garlands at my house shall be woven by any hands but those of the pretty Nydia."

Nydia smiled joyously, but did not answer; and Glaucus, placing in his breast the violets he had selected, turned gayly and carelessly from the crowd.

"So she is a sort of client of yours, this child?" said Clodius.

"Ay — does she not sing prettily? She interests me, the poor slave! Besides, she is from the land of the Gods' hill; Olympus frowned upon her cradle — she is of Thessaly."

"The witches' country."

"True: but for my part I find every woman a witch; and at Pompeii, by Venus! the very air seems to have taken a love-philtre, so handsome does every face without a beard seem in my eyes."

"And lo! one of the handsomest in Pompeii, old Diomed's

daughter, the rich Julia!" said Clodius, as a young lady, her face covered by her veil, and attended by two female slaves, approached them, on her way to the baths.

"Fair Julia, we salute thee!" said Clodius.

Julia partly raised her veil, so as with some coquetry to display a bold Roman profile, a full dark bright eye, and a cheek over whose natural olive art shed a fairer and softer rose.

"And Glaucus, too, is returned!" said she, glancing meaningly at the Athenian. "Has he forgotten," she added, in a half-whisper, "his friends of the last year?"

"Beautiful Julia! even Lethe itself, if it disappear in one part of the earth, rises again in another. Jupiter does not allow us ever to forget for more than a moment; but Venus, more harsh still, vouchsafes not even a moment's oblivion."

"Glaucus is never at a loss for fair words."

"Who is, when the object of them is so fair?"

"We shall see you both at my father's villa soon," said Julia, turning to Clodius.

"We will mark the day in which we visit you with a white stone," answered the gamester.

Julia dropped her veil, but slowly, so that her last glance rested on the Athenian with affected timidity and real boldness; the glance bespoke tenderness and reproach.

The friends passed on.

"Julia is certainly handsome," said Glaucus.

"And last year you would have made that confession in a warmer tone."

"True; I was dazzled at the first sight, and mistook for a gem that which was but an artful imitation."

"Nay," returned Clodius, "all women are the same at heart. Happy he who weds a handsome face and a large dower. What more can he desire?"

Glaucus sighed.

They were now in a street less crowded than the rest, at the end of which they beheld that broad and most lovely sea, which upon those delicious coasts seems to have renounced its prerogative of terror, — so soft are the crisping winds that hover

around its bosom, so glowing and so various are the hues which it takes from the rosy clouds, so fragrant are the perfumes which the breezes from the land scatter over its depths. From such a sea might you well believe that Aphrodite rose to take the empire of the earth.

"It is still early for the bath," said the Greek, who was the creature of every poetical impulse; "let us wander from the crowded city, and look upon the sea while the noon yet laughs along its billows."

"With all my heart," said Clodius; "and the bay, too, is always the most animated part of the city."

Pompeii was the miniature of the civilization of that age. Within the narrow compass of its walls was contained, as it were, a specimen of every gift which luxury offered to power. In its minute but glittering shops, its tiny palaces, its baths, its forum, its theatre, its circus, — in the energy yet corruption, in the refinement yet the vice, of its people, you beheld a model of the whole empire. It was a toy, a plaything, a show-box, in which the gods seemed pleased to keep the representation of the great monarchy of earth, and which they afterwards hid from time to the wonder of posterity; the moral of the maxim that under the sun there is nothing new.

Crowded in the glassy bay were the vessels of commerce and the gilded galleys for the pleasure of the rich citizens. The boats of the fishermen glided rapidly to and fro; and afar off you saw the tall masts of the fleet under the command of Pliny. Upon the shore sat a Sicilian, who, with vehement gestures and flexile features, was narrating to a group of fishermen and peasants a strange tale of shipwrecked mariners and friendly dolphins, — just as at this day, in the modern neighborhood, you may hear upon the Mole of Naples.

Drawing his comrade from the crowd, the Greek bent his steps towards a solitary part of the beach, and the two friends, seated on a small crag which rose amidst the smooth pebbles, inhaled the voluptuous and cooling breeze, which, dancing over the waters, kept music with its invisible feet. There was, perhaps, something in the scene that invited them to silence and reverie. Clodius, shading his eyes from the burning sky, was

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calculating the gains of the last week; and the Greek, leaning upon his hand, and shrinking not from that sun, — his nation's tutelary deity, — with whose fluent light of poesy and joy and love his own veins were filled, gazed upon the broad expanse, and envied, perhaps, every wind that bent its pinions towards the shores of Greece.

"Tell me, Clodius," said the Greek at last, "hast thou ever been in love?"

"Yes, very often."

"He who has loved often," answered Glaucus, "has loved never. There is but one Eros, though there are many counterfeits of him."

"The counterfeits are not bad little gods, upon the whole," answered Clodius.

"I agree with you," returned the Greek. "I adore even the shadow of Love; but I adore himself yet more."

"Art thou, then, soberly and earnestly in love? Hast thou that feeling which the poets describe, — a feeling that makes us neglect our suppers, forswear the theatre, and write elegies? I should never have thought it. You dissemble well."

"I am not far gone enough for that," returned Glaucus, smiling, "or rather I say with Tibullus, —

> 'He whom Love rules, where'er his path may be,
> Walks safe and sacred.'

In fact, I am not in love; but I could be if there were but occasion to see the object. Eros would light his torch, but the priests have given him no oil."

"Shall I guess the object? Is it not Diomed's daughter? She adores you, and does not affect to conceal it; and, by Hercules! I say again and again, she is both handsome and rich. She will bind the door-posts of her husband with golden fillets."

"No, I do not desire to sell myself. Diomed's daughter is handsome, I grant; and at one time, had she not been the grandchild of a freedman, I might have — Yet no — she carries all her beauty in her face; her manners are not maiden-like, and her mind knows no culture save that of pleasure."

"You are ungrateful. Tell me, then, who is the fortunate virgin."

"You shall hear, my Clodius. Several months ago I was sojourning at Neapolis,[1] a city utterly to my own heart, for it still retains the manners and stamp of its Grecian origin, — and it yet merits the name of Parthenope, from its delicious air and its beautiful shores. One day I entered the temple of Minerva, to offer up my prayers, not for myself more than for the city on which Pallas smiles no longer. The temple was empty and deserted. The recollections of Athens crowded fast and meltingly upon me; imagining myself still alone in the temple, and absorbed in the earnestness of my devotion, my prayer gushed from my heart to my lips, and I wept as I prayed. I was startled in the midst of my devotions, however, by a deep sigh; I turned suddenly round, and just behind me was a female. She had raised her veil also in prayer; and when our eyes met, methought a celestial ray shot from those dark and shining orbs at once into my soul. Never, my Clodius, have I seen mortal face more exquisitely moulded: a certain melancholy softened and yet elevated its expression; that unutterable something which springs from the soul, and which our sculptors have imparted to the aspect of Psyche, gave her beauty I know not what of divine and noble; tears were rolling down her eyes. I guessed at once that she was also of Athenian lineage, and that in my prayer for Athens her heart had responded to mine. I spoke to her, though with a faltering voice. 'Art thou not, too, Athenian,' said I, 'O beautiful virgin?' At the sound of my voice she blushed, and half drew her veil across her face. 'My forefathers' ashes,' said she, 'repose by the waters of Ilissus: my birth is of Neapolis; but my heart, as my lineage, is Athenian.' 'Let us, then,' said I, 'make our offerings together:' and, as the priest now appeared, we stood side by side while we followed the priest in his ceremonial prayer; together we touched the knees of the goddess; together we laid our olive garlands on the altar. I felt a strange emotion of almost sacred tenderness at this companionship. We, strangers from a far and

[1] Naples.

fallen land, stood together and alone in that temple of our country's deity: was it not natural that my heart should yearn to my countrywoman, for so I might surely call her? I felt as if I had known her for years; and that simple rite seemed, as by a miracle, to operate on the sympathies and ties of time. Silently we left the temple, and I was about to ask her where she dwelt, and if I might be permitted to visit her, when a youth, in whose features there was some kindred resemblance to her own, and who stood upon the steps of the fane, took her by the hand. She turned round and bade me farewell. The crowd separated us: I saw her no more. On reaching my home I found letters which obliged me to set out for Athens, for my relations threatened me with litigation concerning my inheritance. When that suit was happily over, I repaired once more to Neapolis; I instituted inquiries throughout the whole city. I could discover no clew of my lost countrywoman, and, hoping to lose in gayety all remembrance of that beautiful apparition, I hastened to plunge myself amidst the luxuries of Pompeii. This is all my history. I do not love, but I remember and regret."

As Clodius was about to reply, a slow and stately step approached them, and at the sound it made amongst the pebbles each turned, and each recognized the new-comer.

It was a man who had scarcely reached his fortieth year, of tall stature, and of a thin but nervous and sinewy frame. His skin, dark and bronzed, betrayed his Eastern origin; and his features had something Greek in their outline (especially in the chin, the lip, and the brow), save that the nose was somewhat raised and aquiline, and the bones, hard and visible, forbade that fleshy and waving contour which on the Grecian physiognomy preserved even in manhood the round and beautiful curves of youth. His eyes, large and black as the deepest night, shone with no varying and uncertain lustre; a deep, thoughtful, and half-melancholy calm seemed unalterably fixed in their majestic and commanding gaze. His step and mien were peculiarly sedate and lofty, and something foreign in the fashion and the sober hues of his sweeping garments added to the impressive effect of his quiet countenance and stately

form. Each of the young men, in saluting the new-comer, made mechanically, and with care to conceal it from him, a slight gesture or sign with their fingers; for Arbaces, the Egyptian, was supposed to possess the fatal gift of the evil eye.

"The scene must, indeed, be beautiful," said Arbaces, with a cold though courteous smile, "which draws the gay Clodius, and Glaucus the all-admired, from the crowded thoroughfares of the city."

"Is nature ordinarily so unattractive?" asked the Greek.

"To the dissipated — yes."

"An austere reply, but scarcely a wise one. Pleasure delights in contrasts; it is from dissipation that we learn to enjoy solitude, and from solitude dissipation."

"So think the young philosophers of the Garden," replied the Egyptian; "they mistake lassitude for meditation, and imagine that, because they are sated with others, they know the delight of loneliness. But not in such jaded bosoms can Nature awaken that enthusiasm which alone draws from her chaste reserve all her unspeakable beauty: she demands from you, not the exhaustion of passion, but all that fervor from which you only seek, in adoring her, a release. When, young Athenian, the moon revealed herself in visions of light to Endymion it was after a day passed, not amongst the feverish haunts of men, but on the still mountains and in the solitary valleys of the hunter."

"Beautiful simile!" cried Glaucus; "most unjust application! Exhaustion! that word is for age, not youth. By me, at least, one moment of satiety has never been known."

Again the Egyptian smiled, but his smile was cold and blighting, and even the unimaginative Clodius froze beneath its light. He did not, however, reply to the passionate exclamation of Glaucus; but after a pause he said, in a soft and melancholy voice, —

"After all, you do right to enjoy the hour while it smiles for you; the rose soon withers, the perfume soon exhales. And we, O Glaucus! strangers in the land, and far from our fathers' ashes, what is there left for us but pleasure or regret, — for you the first, perhaps for me the last!"

The bright eyes of the Greek were suddenly suffused with tears. "Ah, speak not, Arbaces," he cried, — "speak not of our ancestors. Let us forget that there were ever other liberties than those of Rome! And Glory! — oh, vainly would we call her ghost from the fields of Marathon and Thermopylæ!"

"Thy heart rebukes thee while thou speakest," said the Egyptian; "and in thy gayeties this night thou wilt be more mindful of Leæna[1] than of Lais. *Vale!*"

Thus saying, he gathered his robe around him and slowly swept away.

"I breathe more freely," said Clodius. "Imitating the Egyptians, we sometimes introduce a skeleton at our feasts. In truth, the presence of such an Egyptian as yon gliding shadow were spectre enough to sour the richest grape of the Falernian."

"Strange man!" said Glaucus, musingly; "yet dead though he seem to pleasure, and cold to the objects of the world, scandal belies him, or his house and his heart could tell a different tale."

"Ah! there are whispers of other orgies than those of Osiris in his gloomy mansion. He is rich, too, they say. Can we not get him amongst us, and teach him the charms of dice? Pleasure of pleasures! hot fever of hope and fear! inexpressible, unjaded passion! how fiercely beautiful thou art, O Gaming!"

"Inspired — inspired!" cried Glaucus, laughing; "the oracle speaks poetry in Clodius. What miracle next!"

[1] Leæna, the heroic mistress of Aristogiton, when put to the torture, bit out her tongue, that the pain might not induce her to betray the conspiracy against the sons of Pisistratus. The statue of a lioness, erected in her honor, was to be seen at Athens in the time of Pausanias.

CHAPTER III.

PARENTAGE OF GLAUCUS. — DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSES OF POMPEII. — A CLASSIC REVEL.

HEAVEN had given to Glaucus every blessing but one: it had given him beauty, health, fortune, genius, illustrious descent, a heart of fire, a mind of poetry; but it had denied him the heritage of freedom. He was born in Athens, the subject of Rome. Succeeding early to an ample inheritance, he had indulged that inclination for travel so natural to the young, and had drunk deep of the intoxicating draught of pleasure amidst the gorgeous luxuries of the imperial court.

He was an Alcibiades without ambition. He was what a man of imagination, youth, fortune, and talents readily becomes when you deprive him of the inspiration of glory. His house at Rome was the theme of the debauchees, but also of the lovers of art; and the sculptors of Greece delighted to task their skill in adorning the porticos and *exedræ* of an Athenian. His retreat at Pompeii, — alas! the colors are faded now, the walls stripped of their paintings! — its main beauty, its elaborate finish of grace and ornament, is gone; yet when first given once more to the day, what eulogies, what wonder, did its minute and glowing decorations create, — its paintings, its mosaics! Passionately enamoured of poetry and the drama, which recalled to Glaucus the wit and the heroism of his race, that fairy mansion was adorned with representations of Æschylus and Homer. And antiquaries, who resolve taste to a trade, have turned the patron to the professor, and still (though the error is now acknowledged) they style in custom, as they first named in mistake, the disburied house of the Athenian Glaucus "THE HOUSE OF THE DRAMATIC POET."

Previous to our description of this house, it may be as well to convey to the reader a general notion of the houses of Pompeii, which he will find to resemble strongly the plans of Vitruvius; but with all those differences in detail, of caprice



and taste, which being natural to mankind have always puzzled antiquaries. We shall endeavor to make this description as clear and unpedantic as possible.

You enter, then, usually by a small entrance-passage (called *vestibulum*), into a hall, sometimes with (but more frequently without) the ornament of columns; around three sides of this hall are doors communicating with several bedchambers (among which is the porter's), the best of these being usually appropriated to country visitors. At the extremity of the hall, on either side to the right and left, if the house is large, there are two small recesses, rather than chambers, generally devoted to the ladies of the mansion; and in the centre of the tessellated pavement of the hall is invariably a square, shallow reservoir for rain-water (classically termed *impluvium*), which was admitted by an aperture in the roof above; the said aperture being covered at will by an awning. Near this impluvium, which had a peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the ancients, were sometimes (but at Pompeii more rarely than at Rome) placed images of the household gods. The hospitable hearth, often mentioned by the Roman poets, and consecrated to the Lares, was at Pompeii almost invariably formed by a movable *brazier;* while in some corner, often the most ostentatious place, was deposited a huge wooden chest, ornamented and strengthened by bands of bronze or iron, and secured by strong hooks upon a stone pedestal so firmly as to defy the attempts of any robber to detach it from its position. It is supposed that this chest was the money-box, or coffer, of the master of the house; though as no money has been found in any of the chests discovered at Pompeii, it is probable that it was sometimes rather designed for ornament than use.

In this hall (or *atrium*, to speak classically) the clients and visitors of inferior rank were usually received. In the houses of the more "respectable," an *atriensis*, or slave peculiarly devoted to the service of the hall, was invariably retained, and his rank among his fellow-slaves was high and important. The reservoir in the centre must have been rather a dangerous ornament; but the centre of the hall was like the grass-plot of a college, and interdicted to the passers to and fro, who found

ample space in the margin. Right opposite the entrance, at the other end of the hall, was an apartment (*tablinum*), in which the pavement was usually adorned with rich mosaics, and the walls covered with elaborate paintings. Here were usually kept the records of the family, or those of any public office that had been filled by the owner: on one side of this saloon, if we may so call it, was often a dining-room, or *triclinium;* on the other side, perhaps, what we should now term a cabinet of gems, containing whatever curiosities were deemed most rare and costly; and invariably a small passage for the slaves to cross to the farther parts of the house, without passing the apartments thus mentioned. These rooms all opened on a square or oblong colonnade, technically termed peristyle. If the house was small, its boundary ceased with this colonnade; and in that case its centre, however diminutive, was ordinarily appropriated to the purpose of a garden, and adorned with vases of flowers placed upon pedestals: while under the colonnade, to the right and left, were doors admitting to bedrooms,[1] to a second *triclinium*, or eating-room (for the ancients generally appropriated two rooms at least to that purpose, one for summer, and one for winter — or, perhaps, one for ordinary, the other for festive, occasions); and if the owner affected letters, a cabinet, dignified by the name of library, — for a very small room was sufficient to contain the few rolls of papyrus which the ancients deemed a notable collection of books.

At the end of the peristyle was generally the kitchen. Supposing the house was large, it did not end with the peristyle, and the centre thereof was not in that case a garden, but might be perhaps adorned with a fountain, or basin for fish; and at its end, exactly opposite to the tablinum, was generally another eating-room, on either side of which were bedrooms, and perhaps a picture-saloon, or *pinacotheca.*[2] These apartments communicated again with a square or oblong space,

[1] The Romans had bedrooms appropriated not only to the sleep of night, but also to the day siesta (*cubicula diurna*).

[2] In the stately palaces of Rome, this picture-room generally communicated with the atrium.



usually adorned on three sides with a colonnade like the peristyle, and very much resembling the peristyle, only usually longer. This was the proper *viridarium*, or garden, being commonly adorned with a fountain, or statues, and a profusion of gay flowers; at its extreme end was the gardener's house; on either side, beneath the colonnade, were sometimes, if the size of the family required it, additional rooms.

At Pompeii, a second or third story was rarely of importance, being built only above a small part of the house, and containing rooms for the slaves; differing in this respect from the more magnificent edifices of Rome, which generally contained the principal eating-room (or *cœnaculum*) on the second floor. The apartments themselves were ordinarily of small size; for in those delightful climes they received any extraordinary number of visitors in the peristyle (or portico), the hall, or the garden; and even their banquet-rooms, however elaborately adorned and carefully selected in point of aspect, were of diminutive proportions; for the intellectual ancients, being fond of society, not of crowds, rarely feasted more than nine at a time, so that large dinner-rooms were not so necessary with them as with us.[1] But the suite of rooms, seen at once from the entrance, must have had a very imposing effect: you beheld at once the hall richly paved and painted — the tablinum — the graceful peristyle, and (if the house extended farther) the opposite banquet-room and the garden, which closed the view with some gushing fount or marble statue.

The reader will now have a tolerable notion of the Pompeian houses, which resembled in some respects the Grecian, but mostly the Roman fashion of domestic architecture. In almost every house there is some difference in detail from the rest, but the principal outline is the same in all. In all you find the hall, the tablinum, and the peristyle, communicating with each other; in all you find the walls richly painted; and in all the evidence of a people fond of the refining elegances of life. The purity of the taste of the Pompeians in decoration is, however, questionable: they were fond of the gaudiest

[1] When they entertained very large parties, the feast was usually served in the hall.

colors, of fantastic designs; they often painted the lower half of their columns a bright red, leaving the rest uncolored; and where the garden was small, its wall was frequently tinted to deceive the eye as to its extent, imitating trees, birds, temples, etc., in perspective — a meretricious delusion which the graceful pedantry of Pliny himself adopted, with a complacent pride in its ingenuity.

But the house of Glaucus was at once one of the smallest, and yet one of the most adorned and finished of all the private mansions of Pompeii: it would be a model at this day for the house of "a single man in Mayfair," — the envy and despair of the cœlibian purchasers of buhl and marquetry.

You enter by a long and narrow vestibule, on the floor of which is the image of a dog in mosaic, with the well-known "Cave canem," or, "Beware the dog." On either side is a chamber of some size; for the interior part of the house not being large enough to contain the two great divisions of private and public apartments, these two rooms were set apart for the reception of visitors who neither by rank nor familiarity were entitled to admission into the penetralia of the mansion.

Advancing up the vestibule you enter an atrium, that when first discovered was rich in paintings, which *in point of expression* would scarcely disgrace a Raphael. You may see them now transplanted to the Neapolitan Museum; they are still the admiration of connoisseurs, — they depict the parting of Achilles and Briseis. Who does not acknowledge the force, the vigor, the beauty employed in delineating the forms and faces of Achilles and the immortal slave?

On one side the atrium, a small staircase admitted to the apartments for the slaves on the second floor; there also were two or three small bedrooms, the walls of which portrayed the rape of Europa, the battle of the Amazons, etc.

You now enter the tablinum, across which, at either end, hung rich draperies of Tyrian purple, half withdrawn.[1] On the walls was depicted a poet reading his verses to his

[1] The tablinum was also secured at pleasure by sliding-doors.


CAVE CANEM

friends; and in the pavement was inserted a small and most exquisite mosaic, typical of the instructions given by the director of the stage to his comedians.

You passed through this saloon and entered the peristyle; and here (as I have said before was usually the case with the smaller houses of Pompeii) the mansion ended. From each of the seven columns that adorned this court hung festoons of garlands: the centre, supplying the place of a garden, bloomed with the rarest flowers placed in vases of white marble, that were supported on pedestals. At the left hand of this small garden was a diminutive fane, resembling one of those small chapels placed at the side of roads in Catholic countries, and dedicated to the Penates; before it stood a bronzed tripod: to the left of the colonnade were two small cubicula, or bedrooms; to the right was the triclinium, in which the guests were now assembled.

This room is usually termed by the antiquaries of Naples "The Chamber of Leda;" and in the beautiful work of Sir William Gell, the reader will find an engraving from that most delicate and graceful painting of Leda presenting her new-born to her husband, from which the room derives its name. This charming apartment opened upon the fragrant garden. Round the table of citrean[1] wood, highly polished and delicately wrought with silver arabesques, were placed the three couches, which were yet more common at Pompeii than the semicircular seat that had grown lately into fashion at Rome; and on these couches of bronze, studded with richer metals, were laid thick quiltings covered with elaborate broidery, and yielding luxuriously to the pressure.

"Well, I must own," said the ædile Pansa, "that your house, though scarcely larger than a case for one's fibulæ, is a gem of its kind. How beautifully painted is that parting of Achilles and Briseis! — what a style! — what heads! — what a — hem!"

"Praise from Pansa is indeed valuable on such subjects,"

[1] The most valued wood, — not the modern citron-tree. My learned friend, Mr. W. S. Landor, conjectures it with much plausibility to have been mahogany.

said Clodius, gravely. "Why, the paintings on *his* walls! — Ah, there is, indeed, the hand of a Zeuxis!"

"You flatter me, my Clodius, indeed you do," quoth the ædile, who was celebrated through Pompeii for having the worst paintings in the world; for he was patriotic, and patronized none but Pompeians. "You flatter me; but there is something pretty — Ædepol! yes — in the colors, to say nothing of the design; and then for the kitchen, my friends — ah! that was all my fancy."

"What is the design?" said Glaucus. "I have not yet seen your kitchen, though I have often witnessed the excellence of its cheer."

"A cook, my Athenian, — a cook sacrificing the trophies of his skill on the altar of Vesta, with a beautiful muræna (taken from the life) on a spit at a distance; there is some invention there!"

At that instant the slaves appeared, bearing a tray covered with the first preparative initia of the feast. Amidst delicious figs, fresh herbs strewed with snow, anchovies, and eggs, were ranged small cups of diluted wine sparingly mixed with honey. As these were placed on the table, young slaves bore round to each of the five guests (for there were no more) the silver basin of perfumed water, and napkins edged with a purple fringe. But the ædile ostentatiously drew forth his own napkin, which was not, indeed, of so fine a linen, but in which the fringe was twice as broad, and wiped his hands with the parade of a man who felt he was calling for admiration.

"A splendid *mappa* that of yours," said Clodius; "why, the fringe is as broad as a girdle!"

"A trifle, my Clodius, a trifle! They tell me this stripe is the latest fashion at Rome; but Glaucus attends to these things more than I."

"Be propitious, O Bacchus!" said Glaucus, inclining reverentially to a beautiful image of the god placed in the centre of the table, at the corners of which stood the Lares and the salt-holders. The guests followed the prayer, and then, sprinkling the wine on the table, they performed the wonted libation.



This over, the convivialists reclined themselves on the couches, and the business of the hour commenced.

"May this cup be my last," said the young Sallust, as the table, cleared of its first stimulants, was now loaded with the substantial part of the entertainment, and the ministering slave poured forth to him a brimming cyathus, — "May this cup be my last, but it is the best wine I have drunk at Pompeii!"

"Bring hither the amphora," said Glaucus, "and read its date and its character."

The slave hastened to inform the party that the scroll fastened to the cork betokened its birth from Chios, and its age a ripe fifty years.

"How deliciously the snow has cooled it!" said Pansa. "It is just enough."

"It is like the experience of a man who has cooled his pleasures sufficiently to give them a double zest," exclaimed Sallust.

"It is like a woman's 'No,'" added Glaucus: "it cools but to inflame the more."

"When is our next wild-beast fight?" said Clodius to Pansa.

"It stands fixed for the ninth ide of August," answered Pansa: "on the day after the Vulcanalia; we have a most lovely young lion for the occasion."

"Whom shall we get for him to eat?" asked Clodius. "Alas! there is a great scarcity of criminals. You must positively find some innocent or other to condemn to the lion, Pansa."

"Indeed, I have thought very seriously about it of late," replied the ædile, gravely. "It was a most infamous law, that which forbade us to send our own slaves to the wild beasts. Not to let us do what we like with our own, that's what I call an infringement on property itself."

"Not so in the good old days of the Republic," sighed Sallust.

"And then this pretended mercy to the slaves is such a disappointment to the poor people. How they do love to see a good tough battle between a man and a lion; and all this inno-

cent pleasure they may lose (if the gods don't send us a good criminal soon) from this cursed law!"

"What can be worse policy," said Clodius, sententiously, "than to interfere with the manly amusements of the people?"

"Well, thank Jupiter and the Fates! we have no Nero at present," said Sallust.

"He was indeed a tyrant; he shut up our amphitheatre for ten years."

"I wonder it did not create a rebellion," said Sallust.

"It very nearly did," returned Pansa, with his mouth full of wild boar.

Here the conversation was interrupted for a moment by a flourish of flutes, and two slaves entered with a single dish.

"Ah, what delicacy hast thou in store for us now, my Glaucus?" cried the young Sallust, with sparkling eyes.

Sallust was only twenty-four, but he had no pleasure in life like eating; perhaps he had exhausted all the others: yet had he some talent, and an excellent heart — as far as it went.

"I know its face, by Pollux!" cried Pansa. "It is an Ambracian kid! Ho! [snapping his fingers, a usual signal to the slaves] we must prepare a new libation in honor to the newcomer."

"I had hoped," said Glaucus, in a melancholy tone, "to have procured you some oysters from Britain; but the winds that were so cruel to Cæsar have forbid us the oysters."

"Are they in truth so delicious?" asked Lepidus, loosening to a yet more luxurious ease his ungirdled tunic.

"Why, in truth, I suspect it is the distance that gives the flavor; they want the richness of the Brundusium oyster. But at Rome no supper is complete without them."

"The poor Britons! There is some good in them after all," said Sallust. "They produce an oyster."

"I wish they would produce us a gladiator," said the ædile, whose provident mind was musing over the wants of the amphitheatre.

"By Pallas!" cried Glaucus, as his favorite slave crowned his streaming locks with a new chaplet, "I love these wild spectacles well enough when beast fights beast; but when a

man, one with bones and blood like ours, is coldly put on the arena, and torn limb from limb, the interest is too horrid. I sicken; I gasp for breath; I long to rush and defend him. The yells of the populace seem to me more dire than the voices of the Furies chasing Orestes. I rejoice that there is so little chance of that bloody exhibition for our next show."

The ædile shrugged his shoulders. The young Sallust, who was thought the best-natured man in Pompeii, stared in surprise. The graceful Lepidus, who rarely spoke for fear of disturbing his features, ejaculated "Hercle!" The parasite Clodius muttered "Ædepol!" and the sixth banqueter, who was the umbra of Clodius,[1] and whose duty it was to echo his richer friend, when he could not praise him, — the parasite of a parasite, — muttered also "Ædepol!"

"Well, you Italians are used to these spectacles; we Greeks are more merciful. Ah, shade of Pindar! the rapture of a true Grecian game, the emulation of man against man, the generous strife, the half-mournful triumph, so proud to contend with a noble foe, so sad to see him overcome! But ye understand me not."

"The kid is excellent," said Sallust. The slave, whose duty it was to carve, and who valued himself on his science, had just performed that office on the kid to the sound of music, his knife keeping time, beginning with a low tenor, and accomplishing the arduous feat amidst a magnificent diapason.

"Your cook is, of course, from Sicily?" said Pansa.

"Yes, of Syracuse."

"I will play you for him," said Clodius. "We will have a game between the courses."

"Better that sort of game, certainly, than a beast-fight; but I cannot stake my Sicilian: you have nothing so precious to stake me in return."

"My Phillida, — my beautiful dancing-girl!"

"I never buy women," said the Greek, carelessly rearranging his chaplet.

The musicians, who were stationed in the portico without, had commenced their office with the kid; they now directed

[1] See note (*b*) at the end.

the melody into a more soft, a more gay, yet it may be a more intellectual strain; and they chanted that song of Horace beginning "Persicos odi," etc., so impossible to translate, and which they imagined applicable to a feast that, effeminate as it seems to us, was simple enough for the gorgeous revelry of the time. We are witnessing the domestic, and not the princely feast, — the entertainment of a gentleman, not an emperor or a senator.

"Ah, good old Horace!" said Sallust, compassionately; "he sang well of feasts and girls, but not like our modern poets."

"The immortal Fulvius, for instance," said Clodius.

"Ah, Fulvius, the immortal!" said the umbra.

"And Spuræna; and Caius Mutius, who wrote three epics in a year — could Horace do that, or Virgil either?" said Lepidus. "Those old poets all fell into the mistake of copying sculpture instead of painting. Simplicity and repose, — that was their notion; but we moderns have fire, and passion, and energy: we never sleep, we imitate the colors of painting, its life, and its action. Immortal Fulvius!"

"By the way," said Sallust, "have you seen the new ode by Spuræna, in honor of our Egyptian Isis? It is magnificent, — the true religious fervor."

"Isis seems a favorite divinity at Pompeii," said Glaucus.

"Yes," said Pansa, "she is exceedingly in repute just at this moment; her statue has been uttering the most remarkable oracles. I am not superstitious, but I must confess that she has more than once assisted me materially in my magistracy with her advice. Her priests are so pious too; none of your gay, none of your proud ministers of Jupiter and Fortune: they walk barefoot, eat no meat, and pass the greater part of the night in solitary devotion!"

"An example to our other priesthoods, indeed! Jupiter's temple wants reforming sadly," said Lepidus, who was a great reformer for all but himself.

"They say that Arbaces the Egyptian has imparted some most solemn mysteries to the priests of Isis," observed Sallust. "He boasts his descent from the race of Rameses, and de-

clares that in his family the secrets of remotest antiquity are treasured."

"He certainly possesses the gift of the evil eye," said Clodius. "If I ever come upon that Medusa front without the previous charm, I am sure to lose a favorite horse, or throw the *canes*[1] nine times running."

"The last would indeed be a miracle!" said Sallust, gravely.

"How mean you, Sallust?" returned the gamester, with a flushed brow.

"I mean, what you would *leave* me if I played often with you; and that is — nothing."

Clodius answered only by a smile of disdain.

"If Arbaces were not so rich," said Pansa, with a stately air, "I should stretch my authority a little, and inquire into the truth of the report which calls him an astrologer and a sorcerer. Agrippa, when ædile of Rome, banished all such terrible citizens. But a rich man — it is the duty of an ædile to protect the rich!"

"What think you of this new sect, which I am told has even a few proselytes in Pompeii, these followers of the Hebrew God — Christus?"

"Oh, mere speculative visionaries," said Clodius; "they have not a single gentleman amongst them; their proselytes are poor, insignificant, ignorant people!"

"Who ought, however, to be crucified for their blasphemy," said Pansa, with vehemence; "they deny Venus and Jove. Nazarene is but another name for atheist. Let me catch them, that's all!"

The second course was gone; the feasters fell back on their couches; there was a pause while they listened to the soft voices of the South, and the music of the Arcadian reed. Glaucus was the most rapt and the least inclined to break the silence, but Clodius began already to think that they wasted time.

"*Bene vobis!* (your health!) my Glaucus," said he, quaffing a cup to each letter of the Greek's name, with the ease of a practised drinker. "Will you not be avenged on your ill-fortune of yesterday? See, the dice court us."

[1] *Canes*, or *Caniculæ*, the lowest throw at dice.

"As you will," said Glaucus.

"The dice in summer, and I an ædile!"[1] said Pansa, magisterially; "it is against all law."

"Not in your presence, grave Pansa," returned Clodius, rattling the dice in a long box; "your presence restrains all license; it is not the thing, but the excess of the thing, that hurts."

"What wisdom!" muttered the umbra.

"Well, I will look another way," said the ædile.

"Not yet, good Pansa; let us wait till we have supped," said Glaucus.

Clodius reluctantly yielded, concealing his vexation with a yawn.

"He gapes to devour the gold," whispered Lepidus to Sallust, in a quotation from the *Aulularia* of Plautus.

"Ah! how well I know these polypi, who hold all they touch," answered Sallust, in the same tone and out of the same play.

The third course, consisting of a variety of fruits, pistachio nuts, sweetmeats, tarts, and confectionery tortured into a thousand fantastic and airy shapes, was now placed upon the table; and the ministri, or attendants, also set there the wine (which had hitherto been handed round to the guests) in large jugs of glass, each bearing upon it the schedule of its age and quality.

"Taste this Lesbian, my Pansa," said Sallust; "it is excellent."

"It is not very old," said Glaucus, "but it has been made precocious, like ourselves, by being put to the fire: the wine to the flames of Vulcan; we to those of his wife, to whose honor I pour this cup."

"It is delicate," said Pansa, "but there is perhaps the least particle too much of rosin in its flavor."

"What a beautiful cup!" cried Clodius, taking up one of transparent crystal, the handles of which were wrought with gems and twisted in the shape of serpents, the favorite fashion at Pompeii.

[1] See note (c) at the end.



"This ring," said Glaucus, taking a costly jewel from the first joint of his finger and hanging it on the handle, "gives it a richer show, and renders it less unworthy of thy acceptance, my Clodius, on whom may the gods bestow health and fortune, long and oft, to crown it to the brim!"

"You are too generous, Glaucus," said the gamester, handing the cup to his slave; "but your love gives it a double value."

"This cup to the Graces!" said Pansa, and he thrice emptied his calyx. The guests followed his example.

"We have appointed no director to the feast," cried Sallust.

"Let us throw for him, then," said Clodius, rattling the dice-box.

"Nay," cried Glaucus, "no cold and trite director for us; no dictator of the banquet; no *rex convivii*. Have not the Romans sworn never to obey a king? Shall we be less free than your ancestors? Ho, musicians! let us have the song I composed the other night: it has a verse on this subject, 'The Bacchic Hymn of the Hours.'"

The musicians struck their instruments to a wild Ionic air, whilst the youngest voices in the band chanted forth, in Greek words, as numbers, the following strain:—

THE EVENING HYMN OF THE HOURS.

I.

Through the summer day, through the weary day,
We have glided long;
Ere we speed to the Night through her portals gray,
Hail us with song!
With song, with song,
With a bright and joyous song;
Such as the Cretan maid,
While the twilight made her bolder,
Woke, high through the ivy shade,
When the wine-god first consoled her.
From the hush'd, low-breathing skies,
Half-shut look'd their starry eyes,
And all around,
With a loving sound,

The Ægean waves were creeping:
On her lap lay the lynx's head;
Wild thyme was her bridal bed;
And aye through each tiny space,
In the green vine's green embrace,
The Fauns were slyly peeping:
The Fauns, the prying Fauns,
The arch, the laughing Fauns, —
The Fauns were slyly peeping!

II.

Flagging and faint are we
With our ceaseless flight,
And dull shall our journey be
Through the realm of night.
Bathe us, oh, bathe our weary wings,
In the purple wave, as it freshly springs
To your cups from the fount of light —
From the fount of light — from the fount of light;
For there, when the sun has gone down in night,
There in the bowl we find him.
The grape is the well of that summer sun,
Or rather the stream that he gazed upon
Till he left in truth, like the Thespian youth,[1]
His soul, as he gazed, behind him.

III.

A cup to Jove, and a cup to Love,
And a cup to the son of Maia;
And honor with three, the band-zone free,
The band of the bright Aglaia.
But since every bud in the wreath of pleasure
Ye owe to the sister Hours,
No stinted cups, in a formal measure,
The Bromian law makes ours.
He honors us most who gives us most,
And boasts, with a Bacchanal's honest boast,
He never will *count* the treasure.
Fastly we fleet, then seize our wings,
And plunge us deep in the sparkling springs;
And aye, as we rise with a dripping plume,
We'll scatter the spray round the garland's bloom.
We glow — we glow.

[1] Narcissus.

Behold, as the girls of the Eastern wave
Bore once with a shout to their crystal cave
The prize of the Mysian Hylas,
Even so — even so,
We have caught the young god in our warm embrace,
We hurry him on in our laughing race;
We hurry him on, with a whoop and song,
The cloudy rivers of night along —
Ho, ho! — we have caught thee, Psilas!

The guests applauded loudly. When the poet is your host, his verses are sure to charm.

"Thoroughly Greek," said Lepidus; "the wildness, force, and energy of that tongue it is impossible to imitate in the Roman poetry."

"It is, indeed, a great contrast," said Clodius, ironically at heart, though not in appearance, "to the old-fashioned and tame simplicity of that ode of Horace which we heard before. The air is beautifully Ionic; the word puts me in mind of a toast, — Companions, I give you the beautiful Ione."

"Ione! — the name is Greek," said Glaucus, in a soft voice. "I drink the health with delight. But who is Ione?"

"Ah! you have but just come to Pompeii, or you would deserve ostracism for your ignorance," said Lepidus, conceitedly; "not to know Ione, is not to know the chief charm of our city."

"She is of the most rare beauty," said Pansa; "and what a voice!"

"She can feed only on nightingales' tongues," said Clodius.

"Nightingales' tongues! beautiful thought!" sighed the umbra.

"Enlighten me, I beseech you," said Glaucus.

"Know then —" began Lepidus.

"Let me speak," cried Clodius; "you drawl out your words as if you spoke tortoises."

"And you speak stones," muttered the coxcomb to himself, as he fell back disdainfully on his couch.

"Know then, my Glaucus," said Clodius, "that Ione is a stranger who has but lately come to Pompeii. She sings like

Sappho, and her songs are her own composing; and as for the tibia and the cithara and the lyre, I know not in which she most outdoes the Muses. Her beauty is most dazzling. Her house is perfect; such taste, such gems, such bronzes! She is rich, and generous as she is rich."

"Her lovers, of course," said Glaucus, "take care that she does not starve; and money lightly won is always lavishly spent."

"Her lovers — ah, there is the enigma! Ione has but one vice — she is chaste. She has all Pompeii at her feet, and she has no lovers; she will not even marry."

"No lovers!" echoed Glaucus.

"No; she has the soul of Vesta, with the girdle of Venus."

"What refined expressions!" said the umbra.

"A miracle!" cried Glaucus. "Can we not see her?"

"I will take you there this evening," said Clodius; "meanwhile —" added he, once more rattling the dice.

"I am yours!" said the complaisant Glaucus. "Pansa, turn your face!"

Lepidus and Sallust played at odd and even, and the umbra looked on, while Glaucus and Clodius became gradually absorbed in the chances of the dice.

"By Pollux!" cried Glaucus, "this is the second time I have thrown the caniculæ" (the lowest throw).

"Now Venus befriend me!" said Clodius, rattling the box for several moments. "O Alma Venus — it is Venus herself!" as he threw the highest cast, named from that goddess, — whom he who wins money, indeed, usually propitiates.

"Venus is ungrateful to me," said Glaucus, gayly; "I have always sacrificed on her altar."

"He who plays with Clodius," whispered Lepidus, "will soon, like Plautus's Curculio, put his pallium for the stakes."

"Poor Glaucus! he is as blind as Fortune herself," replied Sallust, in the same tone.

"I will play no more," said Glaucus; "I have lost thirty sestertia."

"I am sorry —" began Clodius.

"Amiable man!" groaned the umbra.

"Not at all!" exclaimed Glaucus; "the pleasure I take in your gain compensates the pain of my loss."

The conversation now grew general and animated, the wine circulated more freely, and Ione once more became the subject of eulogy to the guests of Glaucus.

"Instead of outwatching the stars, let us visit one at whose beauty the stars grow pale," said Lepidus.

Clodius, who saw no chance of renewing the dice, seconded the proposal; and Glaucus, though he civilly pressed his guests to continue the banquet, could not but let them see that his curiosity had been excited by the praises of Ione: they therefore resolved to adjourn (all, at least, but Pansa and the umbra) to the house of the fair Greek. They drank, therefore, to the health of Glaucus and of Titus, they performed their last libation, they resumed their slippers, they descended the stairs, passed the illumined atrium, and walking unbitten over the fierce dog painted on the threshold, found themselves beneath the light of the moon just risen, in the lively and still crowded streets of Pompeii.

They passed the jewellers' quarters, sparkling with lights, caught and reflected by the gems displayed in the shops, and arrived at last at the door of Ione. The vestibule blazed with rows of lamps; curtains of embroidered purple hung on either aperture of the tablinum, whose walls and mosaic pavement glowed with the richest colors of the artist; and under the portico which surrounded the odorous viridarium they found Ione, already surrounded by adoring and applauding guests.

"Did you say she was Athenian?" whispered Glaucus, ere he passed into the peristyle.

"No, she is from Neapolis."

"Neapolis!" echoed Glaucus; and at that moment the group, dividing on either side of Ione, gave to his view that bright, that nymph-like beauty which for months had shone down upon the waters of his memory.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEMPLE OF ISIS. — ITS PRIEST. — THE CHARACTER OF ARBACES DEVELOPS ITSELF.

THE story returns to the Egyptian. We left Arbaces upon the shores of the noonday sea, after he had parted from Glaucus and his companion. As he approached to the more crowded part of the bay, he paused and gazed upon that animated scene with folded arms, and a bitter smile upon his dark features.

"Gulls, dupes, fools, that ye are!" muttered he to himself; "whether business or pleasure, trade or religion, be your pursuit, you are equally cheated by the passions that ye should rule! How I could loathe you, if I did not hate — yes, hate! Greek or Roman, it is from us, from the dark lore of Egypt, that ye have stolen the fire that gives you souls. Your knowledge, your poesy, your laws, your arts, your barbarous mastery of war (all how tame and mutilated when compared with the vast original!) ye have filched, as a slave filches the fragments of the feast, from us! And now, ye mimics of a mimic! — Romans, forsooth! the mushroom herd of robbers! — *ye* are our masters! The pyramids look down no more on the race of Rameses; the eagle cowers over the serpent of the Nile. *Our* masters — not *mine*. My soul, by the power of its wisdom, controls and chains you, though the fetters are unseen. So long as craft can master force, so long as religion has a cave from which oracles can dupe mankind, the wise hold an empire over earth. Even from your vices Arbaces distils his pleasures; pleasures unprofaned by vulgar eyes; pleasures vast, wealthy, inexhaustible, of which your enervate minds, in their unimaginative sensuality, cannot conceive or dream! Plod on, plod on, fools of ambition and of avarice! your petty thirst for fasces and quæstorships, and all the mummery of servile power, provokes my laughter and my scorn. My power can extend wherever man believes. I ride over the



souls that the purple veils. Thebes may fall, Egypt be a name; the world itself furnishes the subjects of Arbaces."

Thus saying, the Egyptian moved slowly on; and, entering the town, his tall figure towered above the crowded throng of the forum, and swept towards the small but graceful temple consecrated to Isis.[1]

That edifice was then but of recent erection; the ancient temple had been thrown down in the earthquake sixteen years before, and the new building had become as much in vogue with the versatile Pompeians as a new church or a new preacher may be with us. The oracles of the goddess at Pompeii were indeed remarkable, not more for the mysterious language in which they were clothed, than for the credit which was attached to their mandates and predictions. If they were not dictated by a divinity, they were framed at least by a profound knowledge of mankind; they applied themselves exactly to the circumstances of individuals, and made a notable contrast to the vague and loose generalities of their rival temples. As Arbaces now arrived at the rails which separated the profane from the sacred place, a crowd, composed of all classes, but especially of the commercial, collected, breathless and reverential, before the many altars which rose in the open court. In the walls of the cella, elevated on seven steps of Parian marble, various statues stood in niches, and those walls were ornamented with the pomegranate consecrated to Isis. An oblong pedestal occupied the interior building, on which stood two statues, one of Isis, and its companion represented the silent and mystic Orus. But the building contained many other deities to grace the court of the Egyptian deity: her kindred and many-titled Bacchus, and the Cyprian Venus, a Grecian disguise for herself, rising from her bath, and the dog-headed Anubis, and the ox Apis, and various Egyptian idols of uncouth form and unknown appellations.

But we must not suppose that, among the cities of Magna Græcia, Isis was worshipped with those forms and ceremonies which were of right her own. The mongrel and modern nations of the South, with a mingled arrogance and ignorance,

[1] See note (*d*) at the end.

confounded the worships of all climes and ages; and the profound mysteries of the Nile were degraded by a hundred meretricious and frivolous admixtures from the creeds of Cephisus and of Tiber. The temple of Isis in Pompeii was served by Roman and Greek priests, ignorant alike of the language and the customs of her ancient votaries; and the descendant of the dread Egyptian kings, beneath the appearance of reverential awe, secretly laughed to scorn the puny mummeries which imitated the solemn and typical worship of his burning clime.

Ranged now on either side the steps was the sacrificial crowd, arrayed in white garments, while at the summit stood two of the inferior priests, the one holding a palm-branch, the other a slender sheaf of corn. In the narrow passage in front thronged the bystanders.

"And what," whispered Arbaces to one of the bystanders, who was a merchant engaged in the Alexandrian trade, which trade had probably first introduced into Pompeii the worship of the Egyptian goddess, — "what occasion now assembles you before the altars of the venerable Isis? It seems, by the white robes of the group before me, that a sacrifice is to be rendered; and by the assembly of the priests, that ye are prepared for some oracle. To what question is it to vouchsafe a reply?"

"We are merchants," replied the bystander (who was no other than Diomed) in the same voice, "who seek to know the fate of our vessels, which sail for Alexandria to-morrow. We are about to offer up a sacrifice and implore an answer from the goddess. I am not one of those who have petitioned the priest to sacrifice, as you may see by my dress, but I have some interest in the success of the fleet; by Jupiter! yes. I have a pretty trade, else how could I live in these hard times?"

The Egyptian replied gravely, that though Isis was properly the goddess of agriculture, she was no less the patron of commerce. Then turning his head towards the east, Arbaces seemed absorbed in silent prayer.

And now in the centre of the steps appeared a priest robed in white from head to foot, the veil parting over the crown;

two new priests relieved those hitherto stationed at either corner, being naked half-way down to the breast, and covered, for the rest, in white and loose robes. At the same time, seated at the bottom of the steps, a priest commenced a solemn air upon a long wind-instrument of music. Half-way down the steps stood another flamen, holding in one hand the votive wreath, in the other a white wand; while, adding to the picturesque scene of that Eastern ceremony, the stately ibis (bird sacred to the Egyptian worship) looked mutely down from the wall upon the rite, or stalked beside the altar at the base of the steps.

At that altar now stood the sacrificial flamen.[1]

The countenance of Arbaces seemed to lose all its rigid calm while the aruspices inspected the entrails, and to be intent in pious anxiety; to rejoice and brighten as the signs were declared favorable, and the fire began bright and clearly to consume the sacred portion of the victim amidst odors of myrrh and frankincense. It was then that a dead silence fell over the whispering crowd, and the priests gathering round the cella, another priest, naked save by a cincture round the middle, rushed forward, and dancing with wild gestures, implored an answer from the goddess. He ceased at last in exhaustion, and a low murmuring noise was heard within the body of the statue: thrice the head moved, and the lips parted, and then a hollow voice uttered these mystic words: —

> "There are waves like chargers that meet and glow,
> There are graves ready wrought in the rocks below:
> On the brow of the future the dangers lour,
> But blest are your barks in the fearful hour."

The voice ceased; the crowd breathed more freely; the merchants looked at each other. "Nothing can be more plain," murmured Diomed; "there is to be a storm at sea, as there very often is at the beginning of autumn, but our vessels are to be saved. O beneficent Isis!"

"Lauded eternally be the goddess!" said the merchants; "what can be less equivocal than her prediction?"

[1] See a singular picture, in the Museum of Naples, of an Egyptian sacrifice.

Raising one hand in sign of silence to the people, — for the rites of Isis enjoined what to the lively Pompeians was an impossible suspense from the use of the vocal organs, — the chief priest poured his libation on the altar, and after a short concluding prayer the ceremony was over, and the congregation dismissed. Still, however, as the crowd dispersed themselves here and there, the Egyptian lingered by the railing, and when the space became tolerably cleared, one of the priests, approaching it, saluted him with great appearance of friendly familiarity.

The countenance of the priest was remarkably unprepossessing. His shaven skull was so low and narrow in the front as nearly to approach to the conformation of that of an African savage, save only towards the temples, where, in that organ styled acquisitiveness by the pupils of a science modern in name, but best practically known (as their sculpture teaches us) amongst the ancients, two huge and almost preternatural protuberances yet more distorted the unshapely head. Around the brows the skin was puckered into a web of deep and intricate wrinkles; the eyes, dark and small, rolled in a muddy and yellow orbit; the nose, short yet coarse, was distended at the nostrils like a satyr's; and the thick but pallid lips, the high cheek-bones, the livid and motley hues that struggled through the parchment skin, completed a countenance which none could behold without repugnance, and few without terror and distrust. Whatever the wishes of the mind, the animal frame was well fitted to execute them; the wiry muscles of the throat, the broad chest, the nervous hands and lean gaunt arms, which were bared above the elbow, betokened a form capable alike of great active exertion and passive endurance.

"Calenus," said the Egyptian to this fascinating flamen, "you have improved the voice of the statue much by attending to my suggestion; and your verses are excellent. Always prophesy good fortune, unless there is an absolute impossibility of its fulfilment."

"Besides," added Calenus, "if the storm does come, and if it does overwhelm the accursed ships, have we not prophesied

it, and are the barks not blest to be at rest? For rest prays the mariner in the Ægean sea, or at least so says Horace; can the mariner be more at rest in the sea than when he is at the bottom of it?"

"Right, my Calenus; I wish Apæcides would take a lesson from your wisdom. But I desire to confer with you relative to him and to other matters: you can admit me into one of your less sacred apartments?"

"Assuredly," replied the priest, leading the way to one of the small chambers which surrounded the open gate. Here they seated themselves before a small table spread with dishes containing fruit and eggs, and various cold meats, with vases of excellent wine, of which while the companions partook, a curtain, drawn across the entrance opening to the court, concealed them from view, but admonished them by the thinness of the partition to speak low, or to speak no secrets; they chose the former alternative.

"Thou knowest," said Arbaces, in a voice that scarcely stirred the air, so soft and inward was its sound, "that it has ever been my maxim to attach myself to the young. From their flexile and unformed minds I can carve out my fittest tools. I weave, I warp, I mould them at my will. Of the men I make merely followers or servants; of the women —"

"Mistresses," said Calenus, as a livid grin distorted his ungainly features.

"Yes, I do not disguise it; woman is the main object, the great appetite of my soul. As *you* feed the victim for the slaughter, *I* love to rear the votaries of my pleasure. I love to train, to ripen their minds, to unfold the sweet blossom of their hidden passions, in order to prepare the fruit to my taste. I loathe your ready-made and ripened courtesans; it is in the soft and unconscious progress of innocence to desire that I find the true charm of love; it is thus that I defy satiety; and by contemplating the freshness of others, I sustain the freshness of my own sensations. From the young hearts of my victims I draw the ingredients of the caldron in which I re-youth myself. But enough of this: to the subject before us. You know, then, that in Neapolis some time since I encountered

Ione and Apæcides, brother and sister, the children of Athenians who had settled at Neapolis. The death of their parents, who knew and esteemed me, constituted me their guardian. I was not unmindful of the trust. The youth, docile and mild, yielded readily to the impression I sought to stamp upon him. Next to woman, I love the old recollections of my ancestral land; I love to keep alive, to propagate on distant shores (which her colonies perchance yet people) her dark and mystic creeds. It may be that it pleases me to delude mankind while I thus serve the deities. To Apæcides I taught the solemn faith of Isis. I unfolded to him something of those sublime allegories which are couched beneath her worship. I excited in a soul peculiarly alive to religious fervor that enthusiasm which imagination begets on faith. I have placed him amongst you; he is one of you."

"He is so," said Calenus; "but in thus stimulating his faith, you have robbed him of wisdom. He is horror-struck that he is no longer duped: our sage delusions, our speaking statues and secret staircases dismay and revolt him; he pines; he wastes away; he mutters to himself; he refuses to share our ceremonies. He has been known to frequent the company of men suspected of adherence to that new and atheistical creed which denies all our gods, and terms our oracles the inspirations of that malevolent spirit of which Eastern tradition speaks. Our oracles — alas! we know well whose inspirations *they* are!"

"This is what I feared," said Arbaces, musingly, "from various reproaches he made me when I last saw him. Of late he hath shunned my steps; I must find him; I must continue my lessons; I must lead him into the adytum of Wisdom; I must teach him that there are two stages of sanctity, — the first, FAITH, the next, DELUSION: the one for the vulgar, the second for the sage."

"I never passed through the first," said Calenus; "nor you either, I think, my Arbaces."

"You err," replied the Egyptian, gravely. "I believe at this day (not indeed that which I teach, but that which I teach not), Nature has a sanctity against which I cannot (nor would I)

steel conviction. I believe in mine own knowledge, and that has revealed to me— But no matter. Now to earthlier and more inviting themes. If I thus fulfilled my object with Apæcides, what was my design for Ione? Thou knowest already I intend her for my queen, my bride, my heart's Isis. Never till I saw her knew I all the love of which my nature is capable."

"I hear from a thousand lips that she is a second Helen," said Calenus; and he smacked his own lips, but whether at the wine or at the notion it is not easy to decide.

"Yes, she has a beauty that Greece itself never excelled," resumed Arbaces. "But that is not all; she has a soul worthy to match with mine. She has a genius beyond that of woman,—keen, dazzling, bold. Poetry flows spontaneous to her lips; utter but a truth, and, however intricate and profound, her mind seizes and commands it. Her imagination and her reason are not at war with each other; they harmonize and direct her course as the winds and the waves direct some lofty bark. With this she unites a daring independence of thought; she can stand alone in the world; she can be brave as she is gentle; this is the nature I have sought all my life in woman, and never found till now. Ione must be mine! In her I have a double passion; I wish to enjoy a beauty of spirit as of form."

"She is not yours yet, then?" said the priest.

"No; she loves me, but as a friend: she loves me with her mind only. She fancies in me the paltry virtues which I have only the profounder virtue to disdain. But you must pursue with me her history. The brother and sister were young and rich; Ione is proud and ambitious,—proud of her genius, the magic of her poetry, the charm of her conversation. When her brother left me, and entered your temple, in order to be near him she removed also to Pompeii. She has suffered her talents to be known. She summons crowds to her feasts; her voice enchants them, her poetry subdues. She delights in being thought the successor of Erinna."

"Or of Sappho?"

"But Sappho without love! I encouraged her in this bold-

ness of career, — in this indulgence of vanity and of pleasure. I loved to steep her amidst the dissipations and luxury of this abandoned city. Mark me, Calenus, I desired to enervate her mind; it has been too pure to receive yet the breath which I wish not to pass, but burningly to eat into, the mirror. I wished her to be surrounded by lovers, hollow, vain, and frivolous (lovers that her nature must despise), in order to feel the want of love. Then, in those soft intervals of lassitude that succeed to excitement, I can weave my spells, — excite her interest, attract her passions, possess myself of her heart. For it is not the young, nor the beautiful, nor the gay, that should fascinate Ione; her imagination must be won, and the life of Arbaces has been one scene of triumph over the imaginations of his kind."

"And hast thou no fear, then, of thy rivals? The gallants of Italy are skilled in the art to please."

"None! Her Greek soul despises the barbarian Romans, and would scorn itself if it admitted a thought of love for one of that upstart race."

"But thou art an Egyptian, not a Greek!"

"Egypt," replied Arbaces, "is the mother of Athens. Her tutelary Minerva is our deity, and her founder, Cecrops, was the fugitive of Egyptian Sais. This have I already taught to her, and in my blood she venerates the eldest dynasties of earth. But yet I will own that of late some uneasy suspicions have crossed my mind. She is more silent than she used to be; she loves melancholy and subduing music; she sighs without an outward cause. This may be the beginning of love; it may be the want of love. In either case it is time for me to begin my operations on her fancies and her heart: in the one case, to divert the source of love to me; in the other, in me to awaken it. It is for this that I have sought you."

"And how can I assist you?"

"I am about to invite her to a feast in my house; I wish to dazzle, to bewilder, to inflame her senses. Our arts — the arts by which Egypt trained her young novitiates — must be employed; and under veil of the mysteries of religion I will open to her the secrets of love."

"Ah! now I understand: one of those voluptuous banquets that, despite our dull vows of mortified coldness, we, thy priests of Isis, have shared at thy house."

"No, no! Thinkest thou her chaste eyes are ripe for such scenes? No; but first we must ensnare the brother, — an easier task. Listen to me while I give you my instructions."

CHAPTER V.

MORE OF THE FLOWER-GIRL. — THE PROGRESS OF LOVE.

THE sun shone gayly into that beautiful chamber in the house of Glaucus, which I have before said is now called "the Room of Leda." The morning rays entered through rows of small casements at the higher part of the room, and through the door which opened on the garden, that answered to the inhabitants of the southern cities the same purpose that a greenhouse or conservatory does to us. The size of the garden did not adapt it for exercise, but the various and fragrant plants with which it was filled gave a luxury to that indolence so dear to the dwellers in a sunny clime. And now the odors, fanned by a gentle wind creeping from the adjacent sea, scattered themselves over that chamber, whose walls vied with the richest colors of the most glowing flowers. Besides the gem of the room — the painting of Leda and Tyndarus — in the centre of each compartment of the walls were set other pictures of exquisite beauty. In one you saw Cupid leaning on the knees of Venus; in another Ariadne sleeping on the beach, unconscious of the perfidy of Theseus. Merrily the sunbeams played to and fro on the tessellated floor and the brilliant walls; far more happily came the rays of joy to the heart of the young Glaucus.

"I have seen her, then," said he as he paced that narrow chamber, — "I have heard her, nay, I have spoken to her again; I have listened to the music of her song, and she sung of glory and of Greece. I have discovered the long-sought idol of my

dreams, and like the Cyprian sculptor, I have breathed life into my own imaginings."

Longer, perhaps, had been the enamoured soliloquy of Glaucus, but at that moment a shadow darkened the threshold of the chamber, and a young female, still half a child in years, broke upon his solitude. She was dressed simply in a white tunic, which reached from the neck to the ankles; under her arm she bore a basket of flowers, and in the other hand she held a bronze water-vase; her features were more formed than exactly became her years, yet they were soft and feminine in their outline, and, without being beautiful in themselves, they were almost made so by their beauty of expression; there was something ineffably gentle, and you would say patient, in her aspect. A look of resigned sorrow, of tranquil endurance, had banished the smile, but not the sweetness, from her lips; something timid and cautious in her step, something wandering in her eyes, led you to suspect the affliction which she had suffered from her birth: she was blind, but in the orbs themselves there was no visible defect; their melancholy and subdued light was clear, cloudless, and serene. "They tell me that Glaucus is here," said she; "may I come in?"

"Ah, my Nydia," said the Greek, "is that you? I knew you would not neglect my invitation."

"Glaucus did but justice to himself," answered Nydia, with a blush; "for he has always been kind to the poor blind girl."

"Who could be otherwise?" said Glaucus, tenderly, and in the voice of a compassionate brother.

Nydia sighed and paused before she resumed, without replying to his remark. "You have but lately returned?"

"This is the sixth sun that hath shone upon me at Pompeii."

"And you are well? Ah, I need not ask; for who that sees the earth, which they tell me is so beautiful, can be ill?"

"I am well. And you, Nydia, how you have grown! Next year you will be thinking what answer to make your lovers."

A second blush passed over the cheek of Nydia, but this time she frowned as she blushed. "I have brought you some

flowers," said she, without replying to a remark that she seemed to resent; and feeling about the room till she found the table that stood by Glaucus, she laid the basket upon it; "they are poor, but they are fresh-gathered."

"They might come from Flora herself," said he, kindly; "and I renew again my vow to the Graces, that I will wear no other garlands while thy hands can weave me such as these."

"And how find you the flowers in your viridarium? Are they thriving?"

"Wonderfully so. The Lares themselves must have tended them."

"Ah, now you give me pleasure; for I came, as often as I could steal the leisure, to water and tend them in your absence."

"How shall I thank thee, fair Nydia?" said the Greek. "Glaucus little dreamed that he left one memory so watchful over his favorites at Pompeii."

The hand of the child trembled, and her breast heaved beneath her tunic. She turned round in embarrassment. "The sun is hot for the poor flowers," said she, "to-day, and they will miss me; for I have been ill lately, and it is nine days since I visited them."

"Ill, Nydia! yet your cheek has more color than it had last year."

"I am often ailing," said the blind girl, touchingly; "and as I grow up I grieve more that I am blind. But now to the flowers!" So saying, she made a slight reverence with her head, and passing into the viridarium, busied herself with watering the flowers.

"Poor Nydia," thought Glaucus, gazing on her; "thine is a hard doom! Thou seest not the earth, nor the sun, nor the ocean, nor the stars; above all, thou canst not behold Ione."

At that last thought his mind flew back to the past evening, and was a second time disturbed in its reveries by the entrance of Clodius. It was a proof how much a single evening had sufficed to increase and to refine the love of the Athenian for Ione, that whereas he had confided to Clodius

the secret of his first interview with her, and the effect it had produced on him, he now felt an invincible aversion even to mention to him her name. He had seen Ione, bright, pure, unsullied, in the midst of the gayest and most profligate gallants of Pompeii, charming rather than awing the boldest into respect, and changing the very nature of the most sensual and the least ideal, — as by her intellectual and refining spells she reversed the fable of Circe, and converted the animals into men. They who could not understand her soul were made spiritual, as it were, by the magic of her beauty; they who had no heart for poetry had ears, at least, for the melody of her voice. Seeing her thus surrounded, purifying and brightening all things with her presence, Glaucus almost for the first time felt the nobleness of his own nature. He felt how unworthy of the goddess of his dreams had been his companions and his pursuits. A veil seemed lifted from his eyes; he saw that immeasurable distance between himself and his associates which the deceiving mists of pleasure had hitherto concealed; he was refined by a sense of his courage in aspiring to Ione. He felt that henceforth it was his destiny to look upward and to soar. He could no longer breathe that name, which sounded to the sense of his ardent fancy as something sacred and divine, to lewd and vulgar ears. She was no longer the beautiful girl once seen and passionately remembered; she was already the mistress, the divinity of his soul. This feeling who has not experienced? If thou hast not, then thou hast never loved.

When Clodius therefore spoke to him in affected transports of the beauty of Ione, Glaucus felt only resentment and disgust that such lips should dare to praise her; he answered coldly, and the Roman imagined that his passion was cured instead of heightened. Clodius scarcely regretted it, for he was anxious that Glaucus should marry an heiress yet more richly endowed, — Julia, the daughter of the wealthy Diomed, whose gold the gamester imagined he could readily divert into his own coffers. Their conversation did not flow with its usual ease; and no sooner had Clodius left him than Glaucus bent his way to the house of Ione. In passing by the thresh-

old he again encountered Nydia, who had finished her graceful task. She knew his step on the instant.

"You are early abroad?" said she.

"Yes; for the skies of Campania rebuke the sluggard who neglects them."

"Ah, would I could see them!" murmured the blind girl, but so low that Glaucus did not overhear the complaint.

The Thessalian lingered on the threshold a few moments, and then guiding her steps by a long staff, which she used with great dexterity, she took her way homeward. She soon turned from the more gaudy streets, and entered a quarter of the town but little loved by the decorous and the sober; but from the low and rude evidences of vice around her she was saved by her misfortune; and at that hour the streets were quiet and silent, nor was her youthful ear shocked by the sounds which too often broke along the obscene and obscure haunts she patiently and sadly traversed.

She knocked at the back door of a sort of tavern; it opened, and a rude voice bade her give an account of the sesterces. Ere she could reply, another voice, less vulgarly accented, said, —

"Never mind those petty profits, my Burbo. The girl's voice will be wanted again soon at our rich friend's revels; and he pays, as thou knowest, pretty high for his nightingales' tongues."

"Oh, I hope not, I trust not," cried Nydia trembling; "I will beg from sunrise to sunset, but send me not there."

"And why?" asked the same voice.

"Because — because I am young and delicately born, and the female companions I meet there are not fit associates for one who — who —"

"Is a slave in the house of Burbo," returned the voice, ironically, and with a coarse laugh.

The Thessalian put down the flowers, and, leaning her face on her hands, wept silently.

Meanwhile Glaucus sought the house of the beautiful Neapolitan. He found Ione sitting amidst her attendants, who were at work around her. Her harp stood at her side, for

Ione herself was unusually idle, perhaps unusually thoughtful, that day. He thought her even more beautiful by the morning light, and in her simple robe, than amidst the blazing lamps, and decorated with the costly jewels of the previous night, — not the less so from a certain paleness that overspread her transparent hues; not the less so from the blush that mounted over them when he approached. Accustomed to flatter, flattery died upon his lips when he addressed Ione. He felt it beneath her to *utter* the homage which every *look* conveyed. They spoke of Greece; this was a theme on which Ione loved rather to listen than to converse: it was a theme on which the Greek could have been eloquent forever. He described to her the silver olive-groves that yet clad the banks of Ilissus, and the temples, already despoiled of half their glories, but how beautiful in decay! He looked back on the melancholy city of Harmodius the free, and Pericles the magnificent, from the height of that distant memory which mellowed into one hazy light all the ruder and darker shades. He had seen the land of poetry chiefly in the poetical age of early youth; and the associations of patriotism were blended with those of the flush and spring of life. And Ione listened to him, absorbed and mute; dearer were those accents and those descriptions than all the prodigal adulation of her numberless adorers. Was it a sin to love her countrymen? She loved Athens in him: the gods of her race, the land of her dreams, spoke to her in his voice. From that time they daily saw each other. At the cool of the evening they made excursions on the placid sea; by night they met again in Ione's porticos and halls. Their love was sudden, but it was strong; it filled all the sources of their life. Heart, brain, sense, imagination, all were its ministers and priests. As you take some obstacle from two objects that have a mutual attraction, they met, and united at once; their wonder was, that they had lived separate so long. And it was natural that they should so love. Young, beautiful, and gifted, — of the same birth and the same souls, — there was poetry in their very union. They imagined the heavens smiled upon their affection. As the persecuted seek refuge

at the shrine, so they recognized in the altar of their love an asylum from the sorrows of earth; they covered it with flowers, — they knew not of the serpents that lay coiled behind.

One evening, the fifth after their first meeting at Pompeii, Glaucus and Ione, with a small party of chosen friends, were returning from an excursion round the bay; their vessel skimmed lightly over the twilight waters, whose lucid mirror was only broken by the dripping oars. As the rest of the party conversed gayly with each other, Glaucus lay at the feet of Ione, and he would have looked up in her face, but he did not dare. Ione broke the pause between them.

"My poor brother," said she, sighing, "how once he would have enjoyed this hour!"

"Your brother," said Glaucus; "I have not seen him. Occupied with you, I have thought of nothing else, or I should have asked if that was not your brother for whose companionship you left me at the Temple of Minerva, in Neapolis."

"It was."

"And is he here?"

"He is."

"At Pompeii, and not constantly with you! Impossible!"

"He has other duties," answered Ione, sadly; "he is a priest of Isis."

"So young, too; and that priesthood, in its laws at least, so severe!" said the warm and bright-hearted Greek, in surprise and pity. "What could have been his inducement?"

"He was always enthusiastic and fervent in religious devotion, and the eloquence of an Egyptian — our friend and guardian — kindled in him the pious desire to consecrate his life to the most mystic of our deities. Perhaps in the intenseness of his zeal he found in the severity of that peculiar priesthood its peculiar attraction."

"And he does not repent his choice? I trust he is happy."

Ione sighed deeply, and lowered her veil over her eyes.

"I wish," said she, after a pause, "that he had not been so hasty. Perhaps, like all who expect too much, he is revolted too easily."

"Then he is not happy in his new condition. And this

Egyptian, — was he a priest himself? Was he interested in recruits to the sacred band?"

"No. His main interest was in our happiness. He thought he promoted that of my brother. We were left orphans."

"Like myself," said Glaucus, with a deep meaning in his voice.

Ione cast down her eyes as she resumed, —

"And Arbaces sought to supply the place of our parent. You must know him. He loves genius."

"Arbaces! I know him already; at least, we speak when we meet. But for your praise I would not seek to know more of him. My heart inclines readily to most of my kind. But that dark Egyptian, with his gloomy brow and icy smiles, seems to me to sadden the very sun. One would think that, like Epimenides the Cretan, he had spent forty years in a cave, and had found something unnatural in the daylight ever afterwards."

"Yet, like Epimenides, he is kind, and wise, and gentle," answered Ione.

"Oh, happy that he has thy praise! He needs no other virtues to make him dear to me."

"His calm, his coldness," said Ione, evasively pursuing the subject, "are perhaps but the exhaustion of past sufferings; as yonder mountain [and she pointed to Vesuvius], which we see dark and tranquil in the distance, once nursed the fires forever quenched."

They both gazed on the mountain as Ione said these words; the rest of the sky was bathed in rosy and tender hues, but over that gray summit, rising amidst the woods and vineyards that then clomb half-way up the ascent, there hung a black and ominous cloud, the single frown of the landscape. A sudden and unaccountable gloom came over each as they thus gazed; and in that sympathy which love had already taught them, and which bade them, in the slightest shadows of emotion, the faintest presentiment of evil, turn for refuge to each other, their gaze at the same moment left the mountain, and, full of unimaginable tenderness, met. What need had they of words to say they loved?



CHAPTER VI.

THE FOWLER SNARES AGAIN THE BIRD THAT HAD JUST ESCAPED, AND SETS HIS NETS FOR A NEW VICTIM.

In the history I relate, the events are crowded and rapid as those of the drama. I write of an epoch in which days sufficed to ripen the ordinary fruits of years.

Meanwhile, Arbaces had not of late much frequented the house of Ione; and when he had visited her he had not encountered Glaucus, nor knew he, as yet, of that love which had so suddenly sprung up between himself and his designs. In his interest for the brother of Ione, he had been forced, too, a little while to suspend his interest in Ione herself. His pride and his selfishness were aroused and alarmed at the sudden change which had come over the spirit of the youth. He trembled lest he himself should lose a docile pupil, and Isis an enthusiastic servant. Apæcides had ceased to seek or to consult him. He was rarely to be found; he turned sullenly from the Egyptian, — nay, he fled when he perceived him in the distance. Arbaces was one of those haughty and powerful spirits accustomed to master others; he chafed at the notion that one once his own should ever elude his grasp. He swore inly that Apæcides should not escape him.

It was with this resolution that he passed through a thick grove in the city, which lay between his house and that of Ione, in his way to the latter; and there, leaning against a tree, and gazing on the ground, he came unawares on the young priest of Isis.

"Apæcides!" said he, — and he laid his hand affectionately on the young man's shoulder.

The priest started, and his first instinct seemed to be that of flight. "My son," said the Egyptian, "what has chanced that you desire to shun me?"

Apæcides remained silent and sullen, looking down on the earth, as his lips quivered and his breast heaved with emotion.

"Speak to me, my friend," continued the Egyptian. "Speak. Something burdens thy spirit. What hast thou to reveal?"

"To thee — nothing."

"And why is it to me thou art thus unconfidential?"

"Because thou hast been my enemy."

"Let us confer," said Arbaces, in a low voice; and drawing the reluctant arm of the priest in his own, he led him to one of the seats which were scattered within the grove. They sat down, — and in those gloomy forms there was something congenial to the shade and solitude of the place.

Apæcides was in the spring of his years, yet he seemed to have exhausted even more of life than the Egyptian; his delicate and regular features were worn and colorless; his eyes were hollow, and shone with a brilliant and feverish glare; his frame bowed prematurely, and in his hands, which were small to effeminacy, the blue and swollen veins indicated the lassitude and weakness of the relaxed fibres. You saw in his face a strong resemblance to Ione, but the expression was altogether different from that majestic and spiritual calm which breathed so divine and classical a repose over his sister's beauty. In her, enthusiasm was visible, but it seemed always suppressed and restrained; this made the charm and sentiment of her countenance: you longed to awaken a spirit which reposed, but evidently did not sleep. In Apæcides the whole aspect betokened the fervor and passion of his temperament, and the intellectual portion of his nature seemed, by the wild fire of the eyes, the great breadth of the temples when compared with the height of the brow, the trembling restlessness of the lips, to be swayed and tyrannized over by the imaginative and ideal. Fancy, with the sister, had stopped short at the golden goal of poetry: with the brother, less happy and less restrained, it had wandered into visions more intangible and unembodied; and the faculties which gave genius to the one threatened madness to the other.

"You say I have been your enemy," said Arbaces. "I know the cause of that unjust accusation: I have placed you amidst the priests of Isis; you are revolted at their trickeries and imposture; you think that I too have deceived you; the

purity of your mind is offended; you imagine that I am one of the deceitful — "

"You knew the jugglings of that impious craft," answered Apæcides; "why did you disguise them from me? When you excited my desire to devote myself to the office whose garb I bear, you spoke to me of the holy life of men resigning themselves to knowledge — you have given me for companions an ignorant and sensual herd, who have no knowledge but that of the grossest frauds; you spoke to me of men sacrificing the earthlier pleasures to the sublime cultivation of virtue — you place me amongst men reeking with all the filthiness of vice; you spoke to me of the friends, the enlighteners of our common kind — I see but their cheats and deluders! Oh, it was basely done! You have robbed me of the glory of youth, of the convictions of virtue, of the sanctifying thirst after wisdom. Young as I was, rich, fervent, the sunny pleasures of earth before me, I resigned all without a sigh, nay, with happiness and exultation, in the thought that I resigned them for the abstruse mysteries of diviner wisdom, for the companionship of gods, for the revelations of Heaven; and now — now — "

Convulsive sobs checked the priest's voice; he covered his face with his hands, and large tears forced themselves through the wasted fingers and ran profusely down his vest.

"What I promised to thee, that will I give, my friend, my pupil: these have been but trials to thy virtue; it comes forth the brighter for thy novitiate. Think no more of those dull cheats, assort no more with those menials of the goddess, the atrienses [1] of her hall; you are worthy to enter into the penetralia. I henceforth will be your priest, your guide, and you who now curse my friendship shall live to bless it."

The young man lifted up his head, and gazed with a vacant and wondering stare upon the Egyptian.

"Listen to me," continued Arbaces, in an earnest and solemn voice, casting first his searching eyes around to see that they were still alone. "From Egypt came all the knowledge of the world; from Egypt came the lore of Athens, and the

[1] The slaves who had the care of the atrium.

profound policy of Crete; from Egypt came those early and mysterious tribes which (long before the hordes of Romulus swept over the plains of Italy, and in the eternal cycle of events drove back civilization into barbarism and darkness) possessed all the arts of wisdom and the graces of intellectual life. From Egypt came the rites and the grandeur of that solemn Cære, whose inhabitants taught their iron vanquishers of Rome all that they yet know of elevated in religion and sublime in worship. And how deemest thou, young man, that that dread Egypt, the mother of countless nations, achieved her greatness, and soared to her cloud-capt eminence of wisdom? It was the result of a profound and holy policy. Your modern nations owe their greatness to Egypt — Egypt her greatness to her priests. Rapt in themselves, coveting a sway over the nobler part of man, his soul and his belief, those ancient ministers of God were inspired with the grandest thought that ever exalted mortals. From the revolutions of the stars, from the seasons of the earth, from the round and unvarying circle of human destinies, they devised an august allegory; they made it gross and palpable to the vulgar by the signs of gods and goddesses, and that which in reality was Government they named Religion. Isis is a fable — start not! That for which Isis is a type is a reality, an immortal being; Isis is nothing. Nature, which she represents, is the mother of all things, — dark, ancient, inscrutable, save to the gifted few. 'None among mortals hath ever lifted up my veil,' so saith the Isis that you adore; but to the wise that veil *hath* been removed, and we have stood face to face with the solemn loveliness of Nature. The priests then were the benefactors, the civilizers of mankind; true, they were also cheats, impostors if you will. But think you, young man, that if they had not deceived their kind they could have served them? The ignorant and servile vulgar must be blinded to attain to their proper good; they would not believe a maxim — they revere an oracle. The Emperor of Rome sways the vast and various tribes of earth, and harmonizes the conflicting and disunited elements; thence come peace, order, law, the blessings of life. Think you it is the man, the emperor, that thus sways? No, it

is the pomp, the awe, the majesty that surround him, — *these* are his impostures, his delusions; our oracles and our divinations, our rites and our ceremonies, are the means of *our* sovereignty and the engines of *our* power. They are the same means to the same end, — the welfare and harmony of mankind. You listen to me rapt and intent; the light begins to dawn upon you."

Apæcides remained silent, but the changes rapidly passing over his speaking countenance betrayed the effect produced upon him by the words of the Egyptian, — words made tenfold more eloquent by the voice, the aspect, and the manner of the man.

"While, then," resumed Arbaces, "our fathers of the Nile thus achieved the first elements by whose life chaos is destroyed, namely, the obedience and reverence of the multitude for the few, they drew from their majestic and starred meditations that wisdom which was *no* delusion: they invented the codes and regularities of law, the arts and glories of existence. They asked belief; they returned the gift by civilization. Were not their very cheats a virtue? Trust me, whosoever in yon far heavens of a diviner and more beneficent nature look down upon our world, smile approvingly on the wisdom which has worked such ends. But you wish me to apply these generalities to yourself; I hasten to obey the wish. The altars of the goddess of our ancient faith must be served, and served too by others than the stolid and soulless things that are but as pegs and hooks whereon to hang the fillet and the robe. Remember two sayings of Sextus the Pythagorean, — sayings borrowed from the lore of Egypt. The first is, 'Speak not of God to the multitude;' the second is, 'The man worthy of God is a god among men.' As genius gave to the ministers of Egypt worship, that empire in late ages so fearfully decayed, thus by Genius only can the dominion be restored. I saw in you, Apæcides, a pupil worthy of my lessons, a minister worthy of the great ends which may yet be wrought. Your energy, your talents, your purity of faith, your earnestness of enthusiasm, all fitted you for that calling which demands so imperiously high and ardent qualities: I fanned, therefore, your sacred desires; I stimulated you to the step

you have taken. But you blame me that I did not reveal to you the little souls and the juggling tricks of your companions. Had I done so, Apæcides, I had defeated my own object; your noble nature would have at once revolted, and Isis would have lost her priest."

Apæcides groaned aloud. The Egyptian continued, without heeding the interruption.

"I placed you, therefore, without preparation, in the temple; I left you suddenly to discover and to be sickened by all those mummeries which dazzle the herd. I desired that you should perceive how those engines are moved by which the fountain that refreshes the world casts its waters in the air. It was the trial ordained of old to all our priests. They who accustom themselves to the impostures of the vulgar, are left to practise them; for those, like you, whose higher natures demand higher pursuit, religion opens more godlike secrets. I am pleased to find in you the character I had expected. You have taken the vows; you cannot recede. Advance: I will be your guide."

"And what wilt thou teach me, O singular and fearful man? New cheats — new —"

"No; I have thrown thee into the abyss of disbelief: I will lead thee now to the eminence of faith. Thou hast seen the false types: thou shalt learn now the realities they represent. There is no shadow, Apæcides, without its substance. Come to me this night. Your hand."

Impressed, excited, bewildered by the language of the Egyptian, Apæcides gave him his hand, and master and pupil parted.

It was true that for Apæcides there was no retreat. He had taken the vows of celibacy; he had devoted himself to a life that at present seemed to possess all the austerities of fanaticism, without any of the consolations of belief. It was natural that he should yet cling to a yearning desire to reconcile himself to an irrevocable career. The powerful and profound mind of the Egyptian yet claimed an empire over his young imagination, excited him with vague conjecture, and kept him alternately vibrating between hope and fear.

Meanwhile Arbaces pursued his slow and stately way to the house of Ione. As he entered the tablinum, he heard a voice from the porticos of the peristyle beyond, which, musical as it was, sounded displeasingly on his ear: it was the voice of the young and beautiful Glaucus, and for the first time an involuntary thrill of jealousy shot through the breast of the Egyptian. On entering the peristyle he found Glaucus seated by the side of Ione. The fountain in the odorous garden cast up its silver spray in the air, and kept a delicious coolness in the midst of the sultry noon. The handmaids, almost invariably attendant on Ione, who with her freedom of life preserved the most delicate modesty, sat at a little distance; by the feet of Glaucus lay the lyre on which he had been playing to Ione one of the Lesbian airs. The scene — the group before Arbaces — was stamped by that peculiar and refined ideality of poesy which we yet, not erroneously, imagine to be the distinction of the ancients, — the marble columns, the vases of flowers, the statue, white and tranquil, closing every vista; and, above all, the two living forms, from which a sculptor might have caught either inspiration or despair.

Arbaces, pausing for a moment, gazed on the pair with a brow from which all the usual stern serenity had fled; he recovered himself by an effort, and slowly approached them, but with a step so soft and echoless that even the attendants heard him not, — much less Ione and her lover.

"And yet," said Glaucus, "it is only before we love that we imagine that our poets have truly described the passion; the instant the sun rises, all the stars that had shone in his absence vanish into air. The poets exist only in the night of the heart; they are nothing to us when we feel the full glory of the god."

"A gentle and most glowing image, noble Glaucus."

Both started, and recognized behind the seat of Ione the cold and sarcastic face of the Egyptian.

"You are a sudden guest," said Glaucus, rising, and with a forced smile.

"So ought all to be who know they are welcome," returned Arbaces, seating himself, and motioning to Glaucus to do the same.

"I am glad," said Ione, "to see you at length together; for you are suited to each other, and you are formed to be friends."

"Give me back some fifteen years of life," replied the Egyptian, "before you can place me on an equality with Glaucus. Happy should I be to receive his friendship; but what can I give him in return? Can I make to him the same confidences that he would repose in me, — of banquets and garlands, of Parthian steeds and the chances of the dice? these pleasures suit his age, his nature, his career: they are not for mine."

So saying, the artful Egyptian looked down and sighed; but from the corner of his eye he stole a glance towards Ione, to see how she received these insinuations of the pursuits of her visitor. Her countenance did not satisfy him. Glaucus, slightly coloring, hastened gayly to reply. Nor was he, perhaps, without the wish in his turn to disconcert and abash the Egyptian.

"You are right, wise Arbaces," said he; "we can esteem each other, but we cannot be friends. My banquets lack the secret salt, which, according to rumor, gives such zest to your own. And, by Hercules! when I have reached your age, if I, like you, may think it wise to pursue the pleasures of manhood, like you I shall be doubtless sarcastic on the gallantries of youth."

The Egyptian raised his eyes to Glaucus with a sudden and piercing glance.

"I do not understand you," said he, coldly; "but it is the custom to consider that wit lies in obscurity." He turned from Glaucus as he spoke, with a scarcely perceptible sneer of contempt, and after a moment's pause addressed himself to Ione. "I have not, beautiful Ione," said he, "been fortunate enough to find you within doors the last two or three times that I have visited your vestibule."

"The smoothness of the sea has tempted me much from home," replied Ione, with a little embarrassment.

The embarrassment did not escape Arbaces; but without seeming to heed it, he replied with a smile: "You know that

the old poet says, 'Women should keep within doors, and there converse.'"[1]

"The poet was a cynic," said Glaucus, "and hated women."

"He spake according to the customs of his country, and that country is your boasted Greece."

"To different periods different customs. Had our forefathers known Ione, they had made a different law."

"Did you learn these pretty gallantries at Rome?" said Arbaces, with ill-suppressed emotion.

"One certainly would not go for gallantries to Egypt," retorted Glaucus, playing carelessly with his chain.

"Come, come," said Ione, hastening to interrupt a conversation which she saw, to her great distress, was so little likely to cement the intimacy she had desired to effect between Glaucus and her friend, "Arbaces must not be so hard upon his poor pupil. An orphan, and without a mother's care, I may be to blame for the independent and almost masculine liberty of life that I have chosen: yet it is not greater than the Roman women are accustomed to; it is not greater than the Grecian ought to be. Alas! is it only to be among *men* that freedom and virtue are to be deemed united? Why should the slavery that destroys you be considered the only method to preserve us? Ah! believe me, it has been the great error of men — and one that has worked bitterly on their destinies — to imagine that the nature of women is (I will not say inferior, that may be so, but) so different from their own, in making laws unfavorable to the intellectual advancement of women. Have they not, in so doing, made laws against their children, whom women are to rear, — against the husbands, of whom women are to be the friends, nay, sometimes the advisers?" Ione stopped short suddenly, and her face was suffused with the most enchanting blushes. She feared lest her enthusiasm had led her too far; yet she feared the austere Arbaces less than the courteous Glaucus, for she loved the last, and it was not the custom of the Greeks to allow their women (at least such of their women as they most honored) the same liberty and the same station as those of Italy enjoyed.

[1] Euripides.

She felt, therefore, a thrill of delight as Glaucus earnestly replied, —

"Ever mayst thou think thus, Ione; ever be your pure heart your unerring guide. Happy it had been for Greece if she had given to the chaste the same intellectual charms that are so celebrated amongst the less worthy of her women. No State falls from freedom — from knowledge — while your sex smile only on the free, and by appreciating, encourage the wise."

Arbaces was silent, for it was neither his part to sanction the sentiment of Glaucus, nor to condemn that of Ione; and, after a short and embarrassed conversation, Glaucus took his leave of Ione.

When he was gone, Arbaces, drawing his seat nearer to the fair Neapolitan's, said in those bland and subdued tones in which he knew so well how to veil the mingled art and fierceness of his character, —

"Think not, my sweet pupil, if so I may call you, that I wish to shackle that liberty you adorn while you assume; but which, if not greater, as you rightly observe, than that possessed by the Roman women, must at least be accompanied by great circumspection when arrogated by one unmarried. Continue to draw crowds of the gay, the brilliant, the wise themselves, to your feet; continue to charm them with the conversation of an Aspasia, the music of an Erinna; but reflect, at least, on those censorious tongues which can so easily blight the tender reputation of a maiden; and while you provoke admiration, give, I beseech you, no victory to envy."

"What mean you, Arbaces?" said Ione, in an alarmed and trembling voice; "I know you are my friend, that you desire only my honor and my welfare. What is it you would say?"

"Your friend — ah, how sincerely! May I speak then as a friend, without reserve and without offence?"

"I beseech you do so."

"This young profligate, this Glaucus, how didst thou know him? Hast thou seen him often?" And as Arbaces spoke,

he fixed his gaze steadfastly upon Ione, as if he sought to penetrate into her soul.

Recoiling before that gaze, with a strange fear which she could not explain, the Neapolitan answered with confusion and hesitation: "He was brought to my house as a countryman of my father's, and I may say of mine. I have known him only within this last week or so; but why these questions?"

"Forgive me," said Arbaces; "I thought you might have known him longer, — base insinuator that he is!"

"How! what mean you? Why that term?"

"It matters not; let me not rouse your indignation against one who does not deserve so grave an honor."

"I implore you speak. What has Glaucus insinuated; or rather, in what do you *suppose* he has offended?"

Smothering his resentment at the last part of Ione's question, Arbaces continued: "You know his pursuits, his companions, his habits: the comissatio and the alea (the revel and the dice) make his occupation; and amongst the associates of vice how can he dream of virtue?"

"Still you speak riddles. By the gods! I entreat you, say the worst at once."

"Well, then, it must be so. Know, my Ione, that it was but yesterday that Glaucus boasted openly, yes, in the public baths, of your love to him. He said it amused him to take advantage of it. Nay, I will do him justice, he praised your beauty; who could deny it? But he laughed scornfully when his Clodius or his Lepidus asked him if he loved you enough for marriage, and when he purposed to adorn his door-posts with flowers."

"Impossible! How heard you this base slander?"

"Nay, would you have me relate to you all the comments of the insolent coxcombs with which the story has circled through the town? Be assured that I myself disbelieved at first, and that I have now painfully been convinced by several ear-witnesses of the truth of what I have reluctantly told thee."

Ione sank back, and her face was whiter than the pillar against which she leaned for support.

"I own it vexed, it irritated me, to hear your name thus lightly pitched from lip to lip, like some mere dancing-girl's fame. I hastened this morning to seek and to warn you. I found Glaucus here. I was stung from my self-possession. I could not conceal my feelings; nay, I was uncourteous in thy presence. Canst thou forgive thy friend, Ione?"

Ione placed her hand in his, but replied not.

"Think no more of this," said he; "but let it be a warning voice to tell thee how much prudence thy lot requires. It cannot hurt thee, Ione, for a moment; for a gay thing like this could never have been honored by even a serious thought from Ione. These insults only wound when they come from one we love; far different indeed is he whom the lofty Ione shall stoop to love."

"Love!" muttered Ione, with an hysterical laugh. "Ay, indeed."

It is not without interest to observe in those remote times, and under a social system so widely different from the modern, the same small causes that ruffle and interrupt the "course of love," which operate so commonly at this day; the same inventive jealousy, the same cunning slander, the same crafty and fabricated retailings of petty gossip, which so often now suffice to break the ties of the truest love, and counteract the tenor of circumstances most apparently propitious. When the bark sails on over the smoothest wave, the fable tells us of the diminutive fish that can cling to the keel and arrest its progress: so is it ever with the great passions of mankind; and we should paint life but ill if, even in times the most prodigal of romance, and of the romance of which we most largely avail ourselves, we did not also describe the mechanism of those trivial and household springs of mischief which we see every day at work in our chambers and at our hearths. It is in these, the lesser intrigues of life, that we mostly find ourselves at home with the past.

Most cunningly had the Egyptian appealed to Ione's ruling foible; most dexterously had he applied the poisoned dart to her pride. He fancied he had arrested what he hoped, from the shortness of the time she had known Glaucus, was, at most,



but an incipient fancy; and hastening to change the subject, he now led her to talk of her brother. Their conversation did not last long. He left her, resolved not again to trust so much to absence, but to visit, to watch her, every day.

No sooner had his shadow glided from her presence than woman's pride, her sex's dissimulation, deserted his intended victim, and the haughty Ione burst into passionate tears.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GAY LIFE OF THE POMPEIAN LOUNGER. — A MINIATURE LIKENESS OF THE ROMAN BATHS.

When Glaucus left Ione, he felt as if he trod upon air. In the interview with which he had just been blessed, he had for the first time gathered from her distinctly that his love was not unwelcome to, and would not be unrewarded by her. This hope filled him with a rapture for which earth and heaven seemed too narrow to afford a vent. Unconscious of the sudden enemy he had left behind, and forgetting not only his taunts but his very existence, Glaucus passed through the gay streets, repeating to himself, in the wantonness of joy, the music of the soft air to which Ione had listened with such intentness; and now he entered the Street of Fortune, with its raised footpath, — its houses painted without, and the open doors admitting the view of the glowing frescos within. Each end of the street was adorned with a triumphal arch; and as Glaucus now came before the Temple of Fortune, the jutting portico of that beautiful fane (which is supposed to have been built by one of the family of Cicero, perhaps by the orator himself) imparted a dignified and venerable feature to a scene otherwise more brilliant than lofty in its character. That temple was one of the most graceful specimens of Roman architecture. It was raised on a somewhat lofty podium; and between two flights of steps ascending to a platform, stood the altar of the

goddess. From this platform another flight of broad stairs led to the portico, from the height of whose fluted columns hung festoons of the richest flowers. On either side the extremities of the temple were placed statues of Grecian workmanship; and at a little distance from the temple rose the triumphal arch crowned with an equestrian statue of Caligula, which was flanked by trophies of bronze. In the space before the temple a lively throng was assembled, — some seated on benches and discussing the politics of the empire, some conversing on the approaching spectacle of the amphitheatre. One knot of young men were lauding a new beauty, another discussing the merits of the last play; a third group, more stricken in age, were speculating on the chance of the trade with Alexandria, and amidst these were many merchants in the Eastern costume, whose loose and peculiar robes, painted and gemmed slippers, and composed and serious countenances, formed a striking contrast to the tunicked forms and animated gestures of the Italians. For that impatient and lively people had, as now, a language distinct from speech, — a language of signs and motions, inexpressibly significant and vivacious; their descendants retain it, and the learned Jorio hath written a most entertaining work upon that species of hieroglyphical gesticulation.

Sauntering through the crowd, Glaucus soon found himself amidst a group of his merry and dissipated friends.

"Ah!" said Sallust, "it is a lustrum since I saw you."

"And how have you spent the lustrum? What new dishes have you discovered?"

"I have been scientific," returned Sallust, "and have made some experiments in the feeding of lampreys; I confess I despair of bringing them to the perfection which our Roman ancestors attained."

"Miserable man! and why?"

"Because," returned Sallust, with a sigh, "it is no longer lawful to give them a slave to eat. I am very often tempted to make away with a very fat carptor [butler] whom I possess, and pop him slyly into the reservoir. He would give the fish a most oleaginous flavor! But slaves are not slaves nowa-

days, and have no sympathy with their masters' interest, or Davus would destroy himself to oblige me!"

"What news from Rome?" said Lepidus as he languidly joined the group.

"The emperor has been giving a splendid supper to the senators," answered Sallust.

"He is a good creature," quoth Lepidus; "they say he never sends a man away without granting his request."

"Perhaps he would let me kill a slave for my reservoir," returned Sallust, eagerly.

"Not unlikely," said Glaucus; "for he who grants a favor to one Roman, must always do it at the expense of another. Be sure, that for every smile Titus has caused, a hundred eyes have wept."

"Long live Titus!" cried Pansa, overhearing the emperor's name, as he swept patronizingly through the crowd; "he has promised my brother a quæstorship because he had run through his fortune."

"And wishes now to enrich himself among the people, my Pansa," said Glaucus.

"Exactly so," said Pansa.

"That is putting the people to some use," said Glaucus.

"To be sure," returned Pansa. "Well, I must go and look after the ærarium; it is a little out of repair." And followed by a long train of clients, distinguished from the rest of the throng by the togas they wore (for togas, once the sign of freedom in a citizen, were now the badge of servility to a patron), the ædile fidgeted fussily away.

"Poor Pansa;" said Lepidus: "he never has time for pleasure. Thank Heaven, I am not an ædile!"

"Ah, Glaucus, how are you, — gay as ever?" said Clodius, joining the group.

"Are you come to sacrifice to Fortune?" said Sallust.

"I sacrifice to her every night," returned the gamester.

"I do not doubt it. No man has made more victims!"

"By Hercules, a biting speech!" cried Glaucus, laughing.

"The dog's letter is never out of your mouth, Sallust," said Clodius, angrily; "you are always snarling."

"I may well have the dog's letter in my mouth, since, whenever I play with you, I have the dog's throw in my hand," returned Sallust.

"Hist!" said Glaucus, taking a rose from a flower-girl who stood beside.

"The rose is the token of silence," replied Sallust; "but I love only to see it at the supper-table."

"Talking of that, Diomed gives a grand feast next week," said Sallust; "are you invited, Glaucus?"

"Yes, I received an invitation this morning."

"And I too," said Sallust, drawing a square piece of papyrus from his girdle; "I see that he asks us an hour earlier than usual: an earnest of something sumptuous."[1]

"Oh, he is rich as Crœsus," said Clodius; "and his bill of fare is as long as an epic."

"Well, let us to the baths," said Glaucus: "this is the time when all the world is there; and Fulvius, whom you admire so much, is going to read us his last ode."

The young men assented readily to the proposal, and they strolled to the baths.

Although the public thermæ, or baths, were instituted rather for the poorer citizens than the wealthy (for the last had baths in their own houses), yet to the crowds of all ranks who resorted to them it was a favorite place for conversation, and for that indolent lounging so dear to a gay and thoughtless people. The baths at Pompeii differed, of course, in plan and construction from the vast and complicated thermæ of Rome; and indeed it seems that in each city of the empire there was always some slight modification of arrangement in the general architecture of the public baths. This mightily puzzles the learned, — as if architects and fashion were not capricious before the nineteenth century! Our party entered by the principal porch in the Street of Fortune. At the wing of the portico sat the keeper of the baths, with his two boxes before him, one for the money he received, one for the tickets

[1] The Romans sent tickets of invitation, like the moderns, specifying the hour of the repast; which, if the intended feast was to be sumptuous, was earlier than usual.



he dispensed. Round the walls of the portico were seats crowded with persons of all ranks; while others, as the regimen of the physicians prescribed, were walking briskly to and fro in the portico, stopping every now and then to gaze on the innumerable notices of shows, games, sales, exhibitions, which were painted or inscribed upon the walls. The general subject of conversation was, however, the spectacle announced in the amphitheatre; and each new-comer was fastened upon by a group eager to know if Pompeii had been so fortunate as to produce some monstrous criminal, some happy case of sacrilege or of murder, which would allow the ædiles to provide a man for the jaws of the lion: all other more common exhibitions seemed dull and tame when compared with the possibility of this fortunate occurrence.

"For my part," said one jolly-looking man, who was a goldsmith, "I think the emperor, if he is as good as they say, might have sent us a Jew."

"Why not take one of the new sect of Nazarenes?" said a philosopher. "I am not cruel; but an atheist, one who denies Jupiter himself, deserves no mercy."

"I care not how many gods a man likes to believe in," said the goldsmith; "but to deny all gods is something monstrous."

"Yet I fancy," said Glaucus, "that these people are not absolutely atheists. I am told that they believe in a God,—nay, in a future state."

"Quite a mistake, my dear Glaucus," said the philosopher. "I have conferred with them: they laughed in my face when I talked of Pluto and Hades."

"O ye gods!" exclaimed the goldsmith in horror; "are there any of these wretches in Pompeii?"

"I know there are a few; but they meet so privately that it is impossible to discover who they are."

As Glaucus turned away, a sculptor, who was a great enthusiast in his art, looked after him admiringly.

"Ah!" said he, "if we could get *him* on the arena, there would be a model for you! What limbs! what a head! he ought to have been a gladiator! A subject, a subject worthy of our art! Why don't they give him to the lion?"

Meanwhile Fulvius, the Roman poet, whom his contemporaries declared immortal, and who, but for this history, would never have been heard of in our neglectful age, came eagerly up to Glaucus. "Oh, my Athenian, my Glaucus, you have come to hear my ode! That is indeed an honor; you, a Greek, to whom the very language of common life is poetry. How I thank you. It is but a trifle; but if I secure your approbation, perhaps I may get an introduction to Titus. Oh, Glaucus, a poet without a patron is an amphora without a label! the wine may be good, but nobody will laud it. And what says Pythagoras? 'Frankincense to the gods, but praise to man.' A patron, then, is the poet's priest: he procures him the incense and obtains him his believers."

"But all Pompeii is your patron, and every portico an altar in your praise."

"Ah! the poor Pompeians are very civil; they love to honor merit. But they are only the inhabitants of a petty town, — *spero meliora!* Shall we within?"

"Certainly; we lose time till we hear your poem."

At this instant there was a rush of some twenty persons from the baths into the portico; and a slave stationed at the door of a small corridor now admitted the poet, Glaucus, Clodius, and a troop of the bard's other friends, into the passage.

"A poor place this, compared with the Roman thermæ!" said Lepidus, disdainfully.

"Yet is there some taste in the ceiling," said Glaucus, who was in a mood to be pleased with everything, pointing to the stars which studded the roof.

Lepidus shrugged his shoulders, but was too languid to reply.

They now entered a somewhat spacious chamber, which served for the purposes of the apodyterium (that is, a place where the bathers prepared themselves for their luxurious ablutions). The vaulted ceiling was raised from a cornice, glowingly colored with motley and grotesque paintings; the ceiling itself was panelled in white compartments bordered with rich crimson; the unsullied and shining floor was paved

with white mosaics, and along the walls were ranged benches for the accommodation of the loiterers. This chamber did not possess the numerous and spacious windows which Vitruvius attributes to his more magnificent *frigidarium*. The Pompeians, as all the southern Italians, were fond of banishing the light of their sultry skies, and combined in their voluptuous associations the idea of luxury with darkness. Two windows of glass[1] alone admitted the soft and shaded ray; and the compartment in which one of these casements was placed was adorned with a large relief of the destruction of the Titans.

In this apartment Fulvius seated himself with a magisterial air, and his audience gathering round him, encouraged him to commence his recital.

The poet did not require much pressing. He drew forth from his vest a roll of papyrus, and after hemming three times, as much to command silence as to clear his voice, he began that wonderful ode, of which, to the great mortification of the author of this history, no single verse can be discovered.

By the plaudits he received, it was doubtless worthy of his fame; and Glaucus was the only listener who did not find it excel the best odes of Horace.

The poem concluded, those who took only the cold bath began to undress; they suspended their garments on hooks fastened in the wall, and receiving, according to their condition, either from their own slaves or those of the thermæ, loose robes in exchange, withdrew into that graceful and circular building which yet exists, to shame the unlaving posterity of the south. The more luxurious departed by another door to the tepidarium, a place which was heated to a voluptuous warmth, partly by a movable fireplace, principally by a suspended pavement, beneath which was conducted the caloric of the laconicum.

Here this portion of the intended bathers, after unrobing themselves, remained for some time enjoying the artificial

[1] The discoveries at Pompeii have controverted the long-established error of the antiquaries, that glass windows were unknown to the Romans. The use of them was not, however, common among the middle and inferior classes in their private dwellings.

warmth of the luxurious air. And this room, as befitted its important rank in the long process of ablution, was more richly and elaborately decorated than the rest. The arched roof was beautifully carved and painted; the windows above, of ground glass, admitted but wandering and uncertain rays; below the massive cornices were rows of figures in massive and bold relief; the walls glowed with crimson, the pavement was skilfully tessellated in white mosaics. Here the habituated bathers, men who bathed seven times a day, would remain in a state of enervate and speechless lassitude, either before or (mostly) after the water-bath; and many of these victims of the pursuit of health turned their listless eyes on the newcomers, recognizing their friends with a nod, but dreading the fatigue of conversation.

From this place the party again diverged, according to their several fancies, some to the sudatorium, which answered the purpose of our vapor-baths, and thence to the warm-bath itself; those more accustomed to exercise, and capable of dispensing with so cheap a purchase of fatigue, resorted at once to the calidarium or water-bath.

In order to complete this sketch, and give to the reader an adequate notion of this, the main luxury of the ancients, we will accompany Lepidus, who regularly underwent the whole process, save only the cold-bath which had gone lately out of fashion. Being then gradually warmed in the tepidarium, which has just been described, the delicate steps of the Pompeian *élégant* were conducted to the sudatorium. Here let the reader depict to himself the gradual process of the vapor-bath, accompanied by an exhalation of spicy perfumes. After our bather had undergone this operation, he was seized by his slaves, who always awaited him at the baths, and the dews of heat were removed by a kind of scraper, which (by the way) a modern traveller has gravely declared to be used only to remove the dirt, not one particle of which could ever settle on the polished skin of the practised bather. Thence, somewhat cooled, he passed into the water-bath, over which fresh perfumes were profusely scattered, and on emerging from the opposite part of the room, a cooling shower played over his

head and form. Then wrapping himself in a light robe, he returned once more to the tepidarium, where he found Glaucus, who had not encountered the sudatorium; and now the main delight and extravagance of the bath commenced. Their slaves anointed the bathers from vials of gold, of alabaster, or of crystal, studded with profusest gems, and containing the rarest unguents gathered from all quarters of the world (the number of these smegmata used by the wealthy would fill a modern volume, especially if the volume were printed by a fashionable publisher: *Amoracinum, Megalium, Nardum, — omne quod exit in um*), while soft music played in an adjacent chamber, and such as used the bath in moderation, refreshed and restored by the grateful ceremony, conversed with all the zest and freshness of rejuvenated life.

"Blessed be he who invented baths!" said Glaucus, stretching himself along one of those bronze seats (then covered with soft cushions) which the visitor to Pompeii sees at this day in that same tepidarium. "Whether he were Hercules or Bacchus, he deserved deification."

"But tell me," said a corpulent citizen, who was groaning and wheezing under the operation of being rubbed down, — "tell me, O Glaucus! — evil chance to thy hands, O slave! why so rough? — tell me, — ugh! ugh! — are the baths at Rome really so magnificent?" Glaucus turned and recognized Diomed, though not without some difficulty, so red and so inflamed were the good man's cheeks by the sudatory and the scraping he had so lately undergone. "I fancy they must be a great deal finer than these, eh?"

Suppressing a smile, Glaucus replied, —

"Imagine all Pompeii converted into baths, and you will then form a notion of the size of the imperial thermæ of Rome; but a notion of the *size* only. Imagine every entertainment for mind and body; enumerate all the gymnastic games our fathers invented; repeat all the books Italy and Greece have produced; suppose places for all these games, admirers for all these works; add to this baths of the vastest size, the most complicated construction; intersperse the whole with gardens, with theatres, with porticos, with schools, —

suppose, in one word, a city of the gods composed but of palaces and public edifices, and you may form some faint idea of the glories of the great baths of Rome."

"By Hercules!" said Diomed, opening his eyes; "why, it would take a man's whole life to bathe!"

"At Rome it often does so," replied Glaucus, gravely. "There are many who live only at the baths. They repair there the first hour in which the doors are opened, and remain till that in which the doors are closed. They seem as if they knew nothing of the rest of Rome, as if they despised all other existence."

"By Pollux! you amaze me."

"Even those who bathe only thrice a day contrive to consume their lives in this occupation. They take their exercise in the tennis-court or the porticos to prepare them for the first bath; they lounge into the theatre, to refresh themselves after it. They take their prandium under the trees, and think over their second bath. By the time it is prepared, the prandium is digested. From the second bath they stroll into one of the peristyles to hear some new poet recite, or into the library to sleep over an old one. Then comes the supper, which they still consider but a part of the bath; and then a third time they bathe again, as the best place to converse with their friends."

"Per Hercle! but we have their imitators at Pompeii."

"Yes, and without their excuse. The magnificent voluptuaries of the Roman baths are happy; they see nothing but gorgeousness and splendor; they visit not the squalid parts of the city; they know not that there is poverty in the world. All Nature smiles for them, and her only frown is the last one, which sends them to bathe in Cocytus. Believe me, they are your only true philosophers."

While Glaucus was thus conversing, Lepidus, with closed eyes and scarce perceptible breath, was undergoing all the mystic operations, not one of which he ever suffered his attendants to omit. After the perfumes and the unguents, they scattered over him the luxurious powder, which prevented any farther accession of heat; and this being rubbed away by



the smooth surface of the pumice, he began to indue, not the garments he had put off, but those more festive ones termed "the synthesis," with which the Romans marked their respect for the coming ceremony of supper, if rather, from its hour (three o'clock in our measurement of time), it might not be more fitly denominated dinner. This done, he at length opened his eyes and gave signs of returning life.

At the same time, too, Sallust betokened by a long yawn the evidence of existence.

"It is supper-time," said the epicure; "you, Glaucus and Lepidus, come and sup with me."

"Recollect you are all three engaged to my house next week," cried Diomed, who was mightily proud of the acquaintance of men of fashion.

"Ah, ah! we recollect," said Sallust; "the seat of memory, my Diomed, is certainly in the stomach."

Passing now once again into the cooler air, and so into the street, our gallants of that day concluded the ceremony of a Pompeian bath.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARBACES COGS HIS DICE WITH PLEASURE, AND WINS THE GAME.

THE evening darkened over the restless city as Apæcides took his way to the house of the Egyptian. He avoided the more lighted and populous streets; and as he strode onward with his head buried in his bosom, and his arms folded within his robe, there was something startling in the contrast, which his solemn mien and wasted form presented to the thoughtless brows and animated air of those who occasionally crossed his path.

At length, however, a man of a more sober and staid demeanor, and who had twice passed him with a curious but doubting look, touched him on the shoulder.

"Apæcides!" said he, and he made a rapid sign with his hands: it was the sign of the cross.

"Well, Nazarene," replied the priest, and his pale face grew paler, "what wouldst thou?"

"Nay," returned the stranger, "I would not interrupt thy meditations; but the last time we met I seemed not to be so unwelcome."

"You are not unwelcome, Olinthus; but I am sad and weary: nor am I able this evening to discuss with you those themes which are most acceptable to you."

"O backward of heart!" said Olinthus, with bitter fervor; "and art thou sad and weary, and wilt thou turn from the very springs that refresh and heal?"

"O earth!" cried the young priest, striking his breast passionately, "from what regions shall my eyes open to the true Olympus, where thy gods really dwell? Am I to believe with this man that none whom for so many centuries my fathers worshipped have a being or a name? Am I to break down, as something blasphemous and profane, the very altars which I have deemed most sacred, or am I to think with Arbaces —what?"

He paused, and strode rapidly away in the impatience of a man who strives to get rid of himself. But the Nazarene was one of those hardy, vigorous, and enthusiastic men by whom God in all times has worked the revolutions of earth, and those, above all, in the establishment and in the reformation of His own religion; men who were formed to convert, because formed to endure. It is men of this mould whom nothing discourages, nothing dismays; in the fervor of belief they are inspired and they inspire. Their reason first kindles their passion, but the passion is the instrument they use; they force themselves into men's hearts, while they appear only to appeal to their judgment. Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm; it is the real allegory of the tale of Orpheus: it moves stones, it charms brutes. Enthusiasm is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it.

Olinthus did not then suffer Apæcides thus easily to escape him. He overtook and addressed him thus:—

"I do not wonder, Apæcides, that I distress you; that I shake all the elements of your mind; that you are lost in doubt; that you drift here and there in the vast ocean of uncertain and benighted thought. I wonder not at this; but bear with me a little: watch and pray, — the darkness shall vanish, the storm sleep, and God Himself, as He came of yore on the sea of Galilee, shall walk over the lulled billows, to the delivery of your soul. Ours is a religion jealous in its demands, but how infinitely prodigal in its gifts! It troubles you for an hour, it repays you by immortality."

"Such promises," said Apæcides, sullenly, "are the tricks by which man is ever gulled. Oh, glorious were the promises which led me to the shrine of Isis!"

"But," answered the Nazarene, "ask thy reason, can that religion be sound which outrages all morality? You are told to worship your gods. What are those gods, even according to yourselves, — what their actions, what their attributes? Are they not all represented to you as the blackest of criminals? Yet you are asked to serve them as the holiest of divinities. Jupiter himself is a parricide and an adulterer. What are the meaner deities but imitators of his vices? You are told not to murder, but you worship murderers; you are told not to commit adultery, and you make your prayers to an adulterer. Oh, what is this but a mockery of the holiest part of man's nature, which is faith? Turn now to the God, the one, the true God, to whose shrine I would lead you. If He seem to you too sublime, too shadowy, for those human associations, those touching connections between Creator and creature, to which the weak heart clings, contemplate Him in his Son, who put on mortality like ourselves. His mortality is not indeed declared, like that of your fabled gods, by the vices of our nature, but by the practice of all its virtues. In Him are united the austerest morals with the tenderest affections. If He were but a mere man, He had been worthy to become a god. You honor Socrates; he has his sect, his disciples, his schools. But what are the doubtful virtues of the Athenian, to the bright, the undisputed, the active, the unceasing, the devoted holiness of Christ? I speak to you now

only of His human character. He came in that, as the pattern of future ages, to show us the form of virtue which Plato thirsted to see embodied. This was the true sacrifice that He made for man; but the halo that encircled His dying hour not only brightened earth but opened to us the sight of heaven! You are touched, you are moved. God works in your heart; His spirit is with you. Come, resist not the holy impulse; come at once, unhesitatingly. A few of us are now assembled to expound the Word of God. Come, let me guide you to them. You are sad, you are weary. Listen, then, to the words of God. 'Come to me,' saith He, 'all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!'"

"I cannot now," said Apæcides; "another time."

"Now — now!" exclaimed Olinthus, earnestly, and clasping him by the arm.

But Apæcides, yet unprepared for the renunciation of that faith, that life, for which he had sacrificed so much, and still haunted by the promises of the Egyptian, extricated himself forcibly from the grasp; and feeling an effort necessary to conquer the irresolution which the eloquence of the Christian had begun to effect in his heated and feverish mind, he gathered up his robes and fled away with a speed that defied pursuit.

Breathless and exhausted, he arrived at last in a remote and sequestered part of the city, and the lone house of the Egyptian stood before him. As he paused to recover himself, the moon emerged from a silver cloud and shone full upon the walls of that mysterious habitation.

No other house was near. The darksome vines clustered far and wide in front of the building, and behind it rose a copse of lofty forest-trees sleeping in the melancholy moonlight; beyond stretched the dim outline of the distant hills, and amongst them the quiet crest of Vesuvius, not then so lofty as the traveller beholds it now.

Apæcides passed through the arching vines, and arrived at the broad and spacious portico. Before it, on either side of the steps, reposed the image of the Egyptian sphinx, and the moonlight gave an additional and yet more solemn calm to

those large and harmonious and passionless features in which the sculptors of that type of wisdom united so much of loveliness with awe; half-way up the extremities of the steps darkened the green and massive foliage of the aloe, and the shadow of the Eastern palm cast its long and unwaving boughs partially over the marble surface of the stairs.

Something there was in the stillness of the place, and the strange aspect of the sculptured sphinxes, which thrilled the blood of the priest with a nameless and ghostly fear, and he longed even for an echo to his noiseless steps as he ascended to the threshold.

He knocked at the door, over which was wrought an inscription in characters unfamiliar to his eyes; it opened without a sound, and a tall Ethiopian slave, without question or salutation, motioned to him to proceed.

The wide hall was lighted by lofty candelabra of elaborate bronze, and round the walls were wrought vast hieroglyphics, in dark and solemn colors, which contrasted strangely with the bright hues and graceful shapes with which the inhabitants of Italy decorated their abodes. At the extremity of the hall, a slave, whose countenance, though not African, was darker by many shades than the usual color of the south, advanced to meet him.

"I seek Arbaces," said the priest; but his voice trembled even in his own ear. The slave bowed his head in silence, and leading Apæcides to a wing without the hall, conducted him up a narrow staircase, and then traversing several rooms, in which the stern and thoughtful beauty of the sphinx still made the chief and most impressive object of the priest's notice, Apæcides found himself in a dim and half-lighted chamber, in the presence of the Egyptian.

Arbaces was seated before a small table, on which lay unfolded several scrolls of papyrus, impressed with the same character as that on the threshold of the mansion. A small tripod stood at a little distance, from the incense in which the smoke slowly rose. Near this was a vast globe, depicting the signs of heaven; and upon another table lay several instruments, of curious and quaint shape, whose uses were unknown

to Apæcides. The farther extremity of the room was concealed by a curtain, and the oblong window in the roof admitted the rays of the moon, mingling sadly with the single lamp which burned in the apartment.

"Seat yourself, Apæcides," said the Egyptian, without rising.

The young man obeyed.

"You ask me," resumed Arbaces, after a short pause, in which he seemed absorbed in thought, — "You ask me, or would do so, the mightiest secrets which the soul of man is fitted to receive; it is the enigma of life itself that you desire me to solve. Placed like children in the dark, and but for a little while, in this dim and confined existence, we shape out spectres in the obscurity; our thoughts now sink back into ourselves in terror, now wildly plunge themselves into the guideless gloom, guessing what it may contain; stretching our helpless hands here and there, lest, blindly, we stumble upon some hidden danger; not knowing the limits of our boundary, now feeling them suffocate us with compression, now seeing them extend far away till they vanish into eternity. In this state all wisdom consists necessarily in the solution of two questions, — 'What are we to believe, and what are we to reject?' These questions you desire to decide?"

Apæcides bowed his head in assent.

"Man *must* have some belief," continued the Egyptian, in a tone of sadness. "He must fasten his hope to something: it is our common nature that you inherit when, aghast and terrified to see that in which you have been taught to place your faith swept away, you float over a dreary and shoreless sea of incertitude, you cry for help, you ask for some plank to cling to, some land, however dim and distant, to attain. Well, then, listen. You have not forgotten our conversation of to-day?"

"Forgotten!"

"I confessed to you that those deities for whom smoke so many altars were but inventions. I confessed to you that our rites and ceremonies were but mummeries, to delude and lure the herd to their proper good. I explained to you that from those delusions came the bonds of society, the harmony of the

world, the power of the wise; that power is in the obedience of the vulgar. Continue we then these salutary delusions; if man must have some belief, continue to him that which his fathers have made dear to him, and which custom sanctifies and strengthens. In seeking a subtler faith for us, whose senses are too spiritual for the gross one, let us leave others that support which crumbles from ourselves. This is wise; it is benevolent."

"Proceed."

"This being settled," resumed the Egyptian, "the old landmarks being left uninjured for those whom we are about to desert, we gird up our loins and depart to new climes of faith. Dismiss at once from your recollection, from your thought, all that you have believed before. Suppose the mind a blank, an unwritten scroll, fit to receive impressions for the first time. Look round the world; observe its order, its regularity, its design. Something must have created it; the design speaks a designer: in that certainty we first touch land. But what is that something? — A god, you cry. Stay! no confused and confusing names. Of that which created the world, we know, we can know, nothing, save these attributes, — power and unvarying regularity; stern, crushing, relentless regularity, heeding no individual cases, rolling, sweeping, burning on, no matter what scattered hearts, severed from the general mass, fall ground and scorched beneath its wheels. The mixture of evil with good — the existence of suffering and of crime — in all times have perplexed the wise. They created a god; they supposed him benevolent. How then came this evil? Why did he permit — nay, why invent, why perpetuate — it? To account for this, the Persian creates a second spirit, whose nature is evil, and supposes a continual war between that and the god of good. In our own shadowy and tremendous Typhon, the Egyptians image a similar demon. Perplexing blunder that yet more bewilders us! folly that arose from the vain delusion that makes a palpable, a corporeal, a human being, of this unknown power; that clothes the Invisible with attributes and a nature similar to the Seen. No: to this designer let us give a name that does not command our bewil-

dering associations, and the mystery becomes more clear; that name is NECESSITY. Necessity, say the Greeks, compels the gods. Then why the gods? their agency becomes unnecessary; dismiss them at once. Necessity is the ruler of all we see; power, regularity, — these two qualities make its nature. Would you ask more? You can learn nothing: whether it be eternal, whether it compel us, its creatures, to new careers after that darkness which we call death, we cannot tell. There leave we this ancient, unseen, unfathomable power, and come to that which, to our eyes, is the great minister of its functions. This we can task more, from this we can learn more: its evidence is around us; its name is NATURE. The error of the sages has been to direct their researches to the attributes of necessity, where all is gloom and blindness. Had they confined their researches to Nature, what of knowledge might we not already have achieved? Here patience, examination, are never directed in vain. We see what we explore; our minds ascend a palpable ladder of causes and effects. Nature is the great agent of the external universe, and Necessity imposes upon it the laws by which it acts, and imparts to us the powers by which we examine; those powers are curiosity and memory: their union is reason, their perfection is wisdom. Well, then, I examine by the help of these powers this inexhaustible Nature. I examine the earth, the air, the ocean, the heaven: I find that all have a mystic sympathy with each other; that the moon sways the tides; that the air maintains the earth, and is the medium of the life and sense of things; that by the knowledge of the stars we measure the limits of the earth; that we portion out the epochs of time; that by their pale light we are guided into the abyss of the past; that in their solemn lore we discern the destinies of the future. And thus, while we know not that which Necessity is, we learn, at least, her decrees. And now, what morality do we glean from this religion? — for religion it is. I believe in two deities, Nature and Necessity; I worship the last by reverence, the first by investigation. What is the morality my religion teaches? This: all things are subject but to general rules; the sun shines for the joy of the many — it may bring sorrow

to the few; the night sheds sleep on the multitude, but it harbors murder as well as rest; the forests adorn the earth, but shelter the serpent and the lion; the ocean supports a thousand barks, but it engulfs the one. It is only thus for the general, and not for the universal benefit that Nature acts, and Necessity speeds on her awful course. This is the morality of the dread agents of the world; it is mine, who am their creature. I would preserve the delusions of priestcraft, for they are serviceable to the multitude; I would impart to man the arts I discover, the sciences I perfect; I would speed the vast career of civilizing lore: in this I serve the mass, I fulfil the general law, I execute the great moral that Nature preaches. For myself I claim the individual exception; I claim it for the wise: satisfied that my individual actions are nothing in the great balance of good and evil, satisfied that the product of my knowledge can give greater blessings to the mass than my desires can operate evil on the few (for the first can extend to remotest regions and humanize nations yet unborn), I give to the world wisdom, to myself freedom. I enlighten the lives of others, and I enjoy my own. Yes; our wisdom is eternal, but our life is short: make the most of it while it lasts. Surrender thy youth to pleasure, and thy senses to delight. Soon comes the hour when the wine-cup is shattered, and the garlands shall cease to bloom. Enjoy while you may. Be still, O Apæcides, my pupil and my follower! I will teach thee the mechanism of Nature, — her darkest and her wildest secrets, the lore which fools call magic, and the mighty mysteries of the stars. By this shalt thou discharge thy duty to the mass; by this shalt thou enlighten thy race. But I will lead thee also to pleasures of which the vulgar do not dream; and the day which thou givest to men shall be followed by the sweet night which thou surrenderest to thyself."

As the Egyptian ceased there rose about, around, beneath, the softest music that Lydia ever taught, or Ionia ever perfected. It came like a stream of sound, bathing the senses unawares; enervating, subduing with delight. It seemed the melodies of invisible spirits, such as the shepherd might have heard in the golden age, floating through the vales of Thessaly,

or in the noontide glades of Paphos. The words which had rushed to the lip of Apæcides, in answer to the sophistries of the Egyptian, died tremblingly away. He felt it as a profanation to break upon that enchanted strain: the susceptibility of his excited nature, the Greek softness and ardor of his secret soul, were swayed and captured by surprise. He sank on the seat with parted lips and thirsting ear; while in a chorus of voices, bland and melting as those which waked Psyche in the halls of love, rose the following song: —

THE HYMN OF EROS.

By the cool banks where soft Cephisus flows,
A voice sail'd trembling down the waves of air;
The leaves blushed brighter in the Teian's rose,
The doves couch'd breathless in their summer lair;

While from their hands the purple flowerets fell,
The laughing hours stood listening in the sky;
From Pan's green cave to Ægle's [1] haunted cell,
Heaved the charm'd earth in one delicious sigh.

"Love, sons of earth! I am the power of love!
Eldest of all the gods, with Chaos [2] born;
My smile sheds light along the courts above,
My kisses wake the eyelids of the Morn.

"Mine are the stars — there, ever as ye gaze,
Ye meet the deep spell of my haunting eyes;
Mine is the moon — and, mournful if her rays,
'T is that she lingers where her Carian lies.

"The flowers are mine, — the blushes of the rose,
The violet-charming Zephyr to the shade;
Mine the quick light that in the Maybeam glows,
And mine the day-dream in the lonely glade.

"Love, sons of earth, for love is earth's soft lore,
Look where ye will — earth overflows with ME;
Learn from the waves that ever kiss the shore,
And the winds nestling on the heaving sea.

"All teaches love!" — The sweet voice, like a dream,
Melted in light; yet still the airs above,
The waving sedges, and the whispering stream,
And the green forest rustling, murmur'd, "LOVE!"

[1] The fairest of the Naiads. [2] Hesiod.

As the voices died away, the Egyptian seized the hand of Apæcides, and led him, wandering, intoxicated, yet half-reluctant, across the chamber towards the curtain at the far end; and now, from behind that curtain, there seemed to burst a thousand sparkling stars; the veil itself, hitherto dark, was now lighted by these fires behind into the tenderest blue of heaven. It represented heaven itself, — such a heaven as in the nights of June might have shone down over the streams of Castaly. Here and there were painted rosy and aerial clouds, from which smiled, by the limner's art, faces of divinest beauty, and on which reposed the shapes of which Phidias and Apelles dreamed. And the stars which studded the transparent azure rolled rapidly as they shone, while the music, that again woke with a livelier and lighter sound, seemed to imitate the melody of the joyous spheres.

"Oh! what miracle is this, Arbaces?" said Apæcides in faltering accents. "After having denied the gods, art thou about to reveal to me—"

"Their pleasures!" interrupted Arbaces, in a tone so different from its usual cold and tranquil harmony that Apæcides started, and thought the Egyptian himself transformed; and now, as they neared the curtain, a wild, a loud, an exulting melody burst from behind its concealment. With that sound the veil was rent in twain, it parted, it seemed to vanish into air; and a scene, which no Sybarite ever more than rivalled, broke upon the dazzled gaze of the youthful priest. A vast banquet-room stretched beyond, blazing with countless lights, which filled the warm air with the scents of frankincense, of jasmine, of violets, of myrrh; all that the most odorous flowers, all that the most costly spices could distil, seemed gathered into one ineffable and ambrosial essence: from the light columns that sprang upwards to the airy roof, hung draperies of white, studded with golden stars. At the extremities of the room two fountains cast up a spray, which, catching the rays of the roseate light, glittered like countless diamonds. In the centre of the room as they entered there rose slowly from the floor, to the sound of unseen minstrelsy, a table spread with all the viands which sense ever devoted to

fancy, and vases of that lost Myrrhine fabric,[1] so glowing in its colors, so transparent in its material, were crowned with the exotics of the East. The couches, to which this table was the centre, were covered with tapestries of azure and gold; and from invisible tubes in the vaulted roof descended showers of fragrant waters, that cooled the delicious air, and contended with the lamps, as if the spirits of wave and fire disputed which element could furnish forth the most delicious odors. And now, from behind the snowy draperies, trooped such forms as Adonis beheld when he lay on the lap of Venus. They came, some with garlands, others with lyres; they surrounded the youth; they led his steps to the banquet; they flung the chaplets round him in rosy chains. The earth, the thought of earth, vanished from his soul. He imagined himself in a dream, and suppressed his breath lest he should wake too soon; the senses, to which he had never yielded as yet, beat in his burning pulse, and confused his dizzy and reeling sight. And while thus amazed and lost, once again, but in brisk and Bacchic measures, rose the magic strain:—

ANACREONTIC.

In the veins of the calyx foams and glows
The blood of the mantling vine,
But oh, in the bowl of Youth there glows
A Lesbian, more divine!
Bright, bright,
As the liquid light,
Its waves through thine eyelids shine!

Fill up, fill up, to the sparkling brim,
The juice of the young Lyæus;[2]
The grape is the key that we owe to him
From the jail of the world to free us.
Drink, drink!
What need to shrink,
When the lamps alone can see us?

[1] Which, however, was possibly the porcelain of China, though this is a matter which admits of considerable dispute.

[2] Name of Bacchus, from λύω, to unbind, to release.



Drink, drink, as I quaff from thine eyes
The wine of a softer tree;
Give the smiles to the god of the grape, — thy sighs,
Beloved one, give to me.
Turn, turn,
My glances burn,
And thirst for a look from thee!

As the song ended, a group of three maidens, entwined with a chain of starred flowers, and who, while they imitated, might have shamed the Graces, advanced towards him in the gliding measures of the Ionian dance, such as the Nereids wreathed in moonlight on the yellow sands of the Ægean wave; such as Cytherea taught her handmaids in the marriage-feast of Psyche and her son.

Now approaching, they wreathed their chaplet round his head; now kneeling, the youngest of the three proffered him the bowl, from which the wine of Lesbos foamed and sparkled. The youth resisted no more; he grasped the intoxicating cup; the blood mantled fiercely through his veins. He sank upon the breast of the nymph who sat beside him, and turning with swimming eyes to seek for Arbaces, whom he had lost in the whirl of his emotions, he beheld him seated beneath a canopy at the upper end of the table, and gazing upon him with a smile that encouraged him to pleasure. He beheld him, but not as he had hitherto seen, with dark and sable garments, with a brooding and solemn brow: a robe that dazzled the sight, so studded was its whitest surface with gold and gems, blazed upon his majestic form; white roses, alternated with the emerald and the ruby, and shaped tiara-like, crowned his raven locks. He appeared, like Ulysses, to have gained the glory of a second youth; his features seemed to have exchanged thought for beauty, and he towered amidst the loveliness that surrounded him, in all the beaming and relaxing benignity of the Olympian god.

"Drink, feast, love, my pupil!" said he; "blush not that thou art passionate and young. That which thou art, thou feelest in thy veins; that which thou shalt be, survey!"

With this he pointed to a recess, and the eyes of Apæcides,

following the gesture, beheld on a pedestal, placed between the statues of Bacchus and Idalia, the form of a skeleton.

"Start not," resumed the Egyptian; "that friendly guest admonishes us but of the shortness of life. From its jaws I hear a voice that summons us to ENJOY."

As he spoke, a group of nymphs surrounded the statue; they laid chaplets on its pedestal, and while the cups were emptied and refilled at that glowing board, they sang the following strain: —

BACCHIC HYMNS TO THE IMAGE OF DEATH.

I.

Thou art in the land of the shadowy Host,
 Thou that didst drink and love:
By the Solemn River, a gliding ghost,
 But thy thought is ours above!
 If memory yet can fly
 Back to the golden sky,
 And mourn the pleasures lost!
By the ruin'd hall these flowers we lay,
 Where thy soul once held its palace;
When the rose to thy scent and sight was gay,
 And the smile was in the chalice,
 And the cithara's silver voice
 Could bid thy heart rejoice
 When night eclipsed the day.

Here a new group, advancing, turned the tide of the music into a quicker and more joyous strain: —

II.

Death, death is the gloomy shore
 Where we all sail:
Soft, soft, thou gliding oar;
 Blow soft, sweet gale!
Chain with bright wreaths the Hours;
 Victims if all,
Ever, 'mid song and flowers,
 Victims should fall!

Pausing for a moment, yet quicker and quicker danced the silver-footed music: —

Since Life 's so short, we 'll live to laugh,
Ah, wherefore waste a minute!
If youth 's the cup we yet can quaff,
Be love the pearl within it!

A third band now approached with brimming cups, which they poured in libation upon that strange altar; and once more, slow and solemn, rose the changeful melody: —

III.

Thou art welcome, Guest of gloom,
From the far and fearful sea!
When the last rose sheds its bloom,
Our board shall be spread with thee!
All hail, dark Guest!
Who hath so fair a plea
Our welcome guest to be,
As thou, whose solemn hall
At last shall feast us all
In the dim and dismal coast?
Long yet be *we* the Host?
And thou, Dead Shadow, thou,
All joyless though thy brow,
Thou — but our passing *Guest!*

At this moment, she who sat beside Apæcides suddenly took up the song: —

IV.

Happy is yet our doom,
The earth and the sun are ours!
And far from the dreary tomb
Speed the wings of the rosy Hours:
Sweet is for thee the bowl,
Sweet are thy looks, my love;
I fly to thy tender soul,
As the bird to its mated dove!
Take me, ah, take!
Clasp'd to thy guardian breast,
Soft let me sink to rest:
But wake me — ah, wake!
And tell me with words and sighs,
But more with thy melting eyes,
That my sun is not set;
That the Torch is not quench'd at the Urn,
That we love, and we breathe, and burn,
Tell me — thou lov'st me yet!

BOOK II.

Lucus tremiscit. Tota succusso solo
Nutavit aula, dubia quo pondus daret,
Ac fluctuanti similis. — SENECA: *Thyestes*, v. 696.

Trembled the grove. Earth quivered; with the shock
Quaked all the nodding hall, as doubtful where
Ponderous to fall, — and heaving like a wave.

CHAPTER I.

"A FLASH HOUSE" IN POMPEII — AND THE GENTLEMEN OF THE CLASSIC RING.

To one of those parts of Pompeii, which were tenanted not by the lords of pleasure, but by its minions and its victims; the haunt of gladiators and prize-fighters; of the vicious and the penniless; of the savage and obscene; the Alsatia of an ancient city — we are now transported.

It was a large room that opened at once on the confined and crowded lane. Before the threshold was a group of men, whose iron and well-strung muscles, whose short and Herculean necks, whose hardy and reckless countenances, indicated the champions of the arena. On a shelf, without the shop, were ranged jars of wine and oil; and right over this was inserted in the wall a coarse painting which exhibited gladiators drinking, — so ancient and so venerable is the custom of signs! Within the room were placed several small tables, arranged somewhat in the modern fashion of "boxes," and round these were seated several knots of men, some drinking, some playing at dice, some at that more skilful game called "*duodecim scriptæ*," which certain of the blundering learned have mistaken for chess, though it *rather*, perhaps, resembled backgammon of the two, and was usually, though not always,

played by the assistance of dice. The hour was in the early forenoon, and nothing better, perhaps, than that unseasonable time itself denoted the habitual indolence of these tavern loungers. Yet, despite the situation of the house and the character of its inmates, it indicated none of that sordid squalor which would have characterized a similar haunt in a modern city. The gay disposition of all the Pompeians, who sought, at least, to gratify the sense even where they neglected the mind, was typified by the gaudy colors which decorated the walls, and the shapes, fantastic but not inelegant, in which the lamps, the drinking-cups, the commonest household utensils, were wrought.

"By Pollux!" said one of the gladiators, as he leaned against the wall of the threshold, "the wine thou sellest us, old Silenus," — and as he spoke he slapped a portly personage on the back, — "is enough to thin the best blood in one's veins."

The man thus caressingly saluted, and whose bared arms, white apron, and keys and napkin tucked carelessly within his girdle, indicated him to be the host of the tavern, was already passed into the autumn of his years; but his form was still so robust and athletic, that he might have shamed even the sinewy shapes beside him, save that the muscles had seeded, as it were, into flesh, that the cheeks were swelled and bloated, and the increasing stomach threw into shade the vast and massive chest which rose above it.

"None of thy scurrilous blusterings with me," growled the gigantic landlord, in the gentle semi-roar of an insulted tiger; "my wine is good enough for a carcass which shall so soon soak the dust of the spoliarium." [1]

"Croakest thou thus, old raven!" returned the gladiator, laughing scornfully; "thou shalt live to hang thyself with despite when thou seest me win the palm crown; and when I get the purse at the amphitheatre, as I certainly shall, my first vow to Hercules shall be to forswear thee and thy vile potations evermore."

[1] The place to which the killed or mortally wounded were dragged from the arena.

"Hear to him; hear to this modest Pyrgopolinices! He has certainly served under Bombochides Cluninstaridysarchides,"[1] cried the host. "Sporus, Niger, Tetraides, he declares he shall win the purse from you. Why, by the gods! each of your muscles is strong enough to stifle all his body, or *I* know nothing of the arena!"

"Ha!" said the gladiator, coloring with rising fury, "our lanista would tell a different story."

"What story could he tell against me, vain Lydon?" said Tetraides, frowning.

"Or me, who have conquered in fifteen fights?" said the gigantic Niger, stalking up to the gladiator.

"Or me?" grunted Sporus, with eyes of fire.

"Tush!" said Lydon, folding his arms, and regarding his rivals with a reckless air of defiance. "The time of trial will soon come; keep your valor till then."

"Ay, do," said the surly host; "and if I press down my thumb to save you, may the Fates cut my thread!"

"Your rope, you mean," said Lydon, sneeringly: "here is a sesterce to buy one."

The Titan wine-vender seized the hand extended to him, and griped it in so stern a vice that the blood spirted from the fingers' ends over the garments of the bystanders.

They set up a savage laugh.

"I will teach thee, young braggart, to play the Macedonian with me! I am no puny Persian, I warrant thee! What, man, have I not fought twenty years in the ring, and never lowered my arms once? And have I not received the rod from the editor's own hand as a sign of victory, and as a grace to retirement on my laurels? And am I now to be lectured by a boy?" So saying, he flung the hand from him in scorn.

Without changing a muscle, but with the same smiling face with which he had previously taunted mine host, did the gladiator brave the painful grasp he had undergone. But no sooner was his hand released, than, crouching for one moment as a wild-cat crouches, you might see his hair bristle on his

[1] "Miles Gloriosus," Act I.; as much as to say, in modern phrase, "He has served under Bombastes Furioso."

head and beard, and with a fierce and shrill yell he sprang on the throat of the giant, with an impetus that threw him, vast and sturdy as he was, from his balance; and down, with the crash of a falling rock, he fell, while over him fell also his ferocious foe.

Our host, perhaps, had had no need of the rope so kindly recommended to him by Lydon, had he remained three minutes longer in that position. But, summoned to his assistance by the noise of his fall, a woman, who had hitherto kept in an inner apartment, rushed to the scene of battle. This new ally was in herself a match for the gladiator; she was tall, lean, and with arms that could give other than soft embraces. In fact, the gentle helpmate of Burbo the wine-seller had, like himself, fought in the lists,[1] nay, under the emperor's eye. And Burbo himself — Burbo, the unconquered in the field, according to report — now and then yielded the palm to his soft Stratonice. This sweet creature no sooner saw the imminent peril that awaited her worse half, than without other weapons than those with which Nature had provided her, she darted upon the incumbent gladiator, and, clasping him round the waist with her long and snake-like arms, lifted him by a sudden wrench from the body of her husband, leaving only his hands still clinging to the throat of his foe. So have we seen a dog snatched by the hind legs from the strife with a fallen rival in the arms of some envious groom; so have we seen one half of him high in air, passive and offenceless, while the other half — head, teeth, eyes, claws — seemed buried and engulfed in the mangled and prostrate enemy. Meanwhile, the gladiators, lapped, and pampered, and glutted upon blood, crowded delightedly round the combatants, their nostrils distended, their lips grinning, their eyes gloatingly fixed on the bloody throat of the one and the indented talons of the other.

"*Habet! habet!* [he has got it!]" cried they, with a sort of yell, rubbing their nervous hands.

"*Non habeo*, ye liars! [I have *not* got it!]" shouted the host, as with a mighty effort he wrenched himself from those deadly

[1] Not only did women sometimes fight in the amphitheatres, but even those of noble birth participated in that meek ambition.

hands, and rose to his feet, breathless, panting, lacerated, bloody; and fronting, with reeling eyes, the glaring look and grinning teeth of his baffled foe, now struggling (but struggling with disdain) in the gripe of the sturdy amazon.

"Fair play!" cried the gladiators: "one to one;" and crowding round Lydon and the woman, they separated our pleasing host from his courteous guest.

But Lydon, feeling ashamed at his present position, and endeavoring in vain to shake off the grasp of the virago, slipped his hand into his girdle and drew forth a short knife. So menacing was his look, so brightly gleamed the blade, that Stratonice, who was used only to that fashion of battle which we moderns call the pugilistic, started back in alarm.

"O gods!" cried she, "the ruffian; he has concealed weapons! Is that fair? Is that like a gentleman and a gladiator? No, indeed, I scorn such fellows." With that she contemptuously turned her back on the gladiator, and hastened to examine the condition of her husband.

But he, as much inured to the constitutional exercises as an English bull-dog is to a contest with a more gentle antagonist, had already recovered himself. The purple hues receded from the crimson surface of his cheek, the veins of the forehead retired into their wonted size. He shook himself with a complacent grunt, satisfied that he was still alive, and then looking at his foe from head to foot with an air of more approbation than he had ever bestowed upon him before, —

"By Castor!" said he, "thou art a stronger fellow than I took thee for. I see thou art a man of merit and virtue; give me thy hand, my hero."

"Jolly old Burbo!" cried the gladiators, applauding; "stanch to the backbone. Give him thy hand, Lydon."

"Oh, to be sure," said the gladiator; "but now I have tasted his blood, I long to lap the whole."

"By Hercules!" returned the host, quite unmoved, "that is the true gladiator feeling. Pollux! to think what good training may make a man; why, a beast could not be fiercer!"

"A beast! Oh, dullard! we beat the beasts hollow!" cried Tetraides.

"Well, well," said Stratonice, who was now employed in smoothing her hair and adjusting her dress, "if ye are all good friends again, I recommend you to be quiet and orderly; for some young noblemen, your patrons and backers, have sent to say they will come here to pay you a visit: they wish to see you more at their ease than at the schools, before they make up their bets on the great fight at the amphitheatre. So they always come to my house for that purpose: they know we only receive the best gladiators in Pompeii; our society is very select, praised be the gods!"

"Yes," continued Burbo, drinking off a bowl, or rather a pail of wine, "a man who has won my laurels can only encourage the brave. Lydon, drink, my boy; may you have an honorable old age like mine."

"Come here," said Stratonice, drawing her husband to her affectionately by the ears, in that caress which Tibullus has so prettily described, — "come here."

"Not so hard, she-wolf! thou art worse than the gladiator," murmured the huge jaws of Burbo.

"Hist!" said she, whispering him; "Calenus has just stole in, disguised, by the back way. I hope he has brought the sesterces."

"Ho! ho! I will join him," said Burbo; "meanwhile, I say, keep a sharp eye on the cups: attend to the score. Let them not cheat thee, wife; they are heroes, to be sure, but then they are arrant rogues: Cacus was nothing to them."

"Never fear me, fool!" was the conjugal reply; and Burbo, satisfied with the dear assurance, strode through the apartment and sought the penetralia of his house.

"So those soft patrons are coming to look at our muscles," said Niger. "Who sent to previse thee of it, my mistress?"

"Lepidus. He brings with him Clodius, the surest better in Pompeii, and the young Greek Glaucus."

"A wager on a wager," cried Tetraides; "Clodius bets on me, for twenty sesterces! What say you, Lydon?"

"He bets on *me!*" said Lydon.

"No, on *me!*" grunted Sporus.

"Dolts! do you think he would prefer any of you to Niger?" said the athletic, thus modestly naming himself.

"Well, well," said Stratonice, as she pierced a huge amphora for her guests, who had now seated themselves before one of the tables, "great men and brave, as ye all think yourselves, which of you will fight the Numidian lion in case no malefactor should be found to deprive you of the option?"

"I who have escaped your arms, stout Stratonice," said Lydon, "might safely, I think, encounter the lion."

"But tell me," said Tetraides, "where is that pretty young slave of yours, — the blind girl, with bright eyes? I have not seen her for a long time."

"Oh, she is too delicate for you, my son of Neptune,"[1] said the hostess, "and too nice even for us, I think. We send her into the town to sell flowers and sing to the ladies; she makes us more money so than she would by waiting on you. Besides, she has often other employments which lie under the rose."

"Other employments!" said Niger; "why, she is too young for them."

"Silence, beast!" said Stratonice; "you think there is no play but the Corinthian. If Nydia were twice the age she is at present, she would be equally fit for Vesta, poor girl!"

"But, hark ye, Stratonice," said Lydon; "how didst thou come by so gentle and delicate a slave? She were more meet for the handmaid of some rich matron of Rome than for thee."

"That is true," returned Stratonice; "and some day or other I shall make my fortune by selling her. How came I by Nydia, thou askest?"

"Ay!"

"Why, thou seest, my slave Staphyla — thou rememberest Staphyla, Niger?"

"Ay, a large-handed wench, with a face like a comic mask. How should I forget her, by Pluto, whose handmaid she doubtless is at this moment!"

"Tush, brute! Well, Staphyla died one day, and a great

[1] Son of Neptune, — a Latin phrase for a boisterous, ferocious fellow.

loss she was to me, and I went into the market to buy me another slave. But, by the gods! they were all grown so dear since I had bought poor Staphyla, and money was so scarce, that I was about to leave the place in despair, when a merchant plucked me by the robe. 'Mistress,' said he, 'dost thou want a slave cheap? I have a child to sell, — a bargain. She is but little, and almost an infant, it is true; but she is quick and quiet, docile and clever, sings well, and is of good blood, I assure you.' 'Of what country?' said I. 'Thessalian.' Now I knew the Thessalians were acute and gentle; so I said I would see the girl. I found her just as you see her now, scarcely smaller and scarcely younger in appearance. She looked patient and resigned enough, with her hands crossed on her bosom, and her eyes downcast. I asked the merchant his price. It was moderate, and I bought her at once. The merchant brought her to my house, and disappeared in an instant. Well, my friends, guess my astonishment when I found she was blind! Ha! ha! a clever fellow that merchant! I ran at once to the magistrates, but the rogue was already gone from Pompeii. So I was forced to go home in a very ill humor, I assure you; and the poor girl felt the effects of it too. But it was not her fault that she was blind, for she had been so from her birth. By degrees we got reconciled to our purchase. True, she had not the strength of Staphyla, and was of very little use in the house, but she could soon find her way about the town as well as if she had the eyes of Argus; and when one morning she brought us home a handful of sesterces, which she said she had got from selling some flowers she had gathered in our poor little garden, we thought the gods had sent her to us. So from that time we let her go out as she likes, filling her basket with flowers, which she wreathes into garlands after the Thessalian fashion, which pleases the gallants; and the great people seem to take a fancy to her, for they always pay her more than they do any other flower-girl, and she brings all of it home to us, which is more than any other slave would do. So I work for myself, but I shall soon afford from her earnings to buy me a second Staphyla; doubtless the Thessalian kidnapper had

stolen the blind girl from gentle parents.[1] Besides her skill in the garlands, she sings and plays on the cithara, which also brings money, and lately — but *that* is a secret."

"*That* is a secret! What!" cried Lydon, "art thou turned sphinx?"

"Sphinx, no! Why sphinx?"

"Cease thy gabble, good mistress, and bring us our meat; I am hungry," said Sporus, impatiently.

"And I, too," echoed the grim Niger, whetting his knife on the palm of his hand.

The amazon stalked away to the kitchen, and soon returned with a tray laden with large pieces of meat half-raw: for so, as now, did the heroes of the prize-fight imagine they best sustained their hardihood and ferocity; they drew round the table with the eyes of famished wolves; the meat vanished, the wine flowed. So leave we those important personages of classic life to follow the steps of Burbo.

CHAPTER II.

TWO WORTHIES.

In the earlier times of Rome the priesthood was a profession, not of lucre but of honor. It was embraced by the noblest citizens; it was forbidden to the plebians. Afterwards, and long previous to the present date, it was equally open to all ranks; at least, that part of the profession which embraced the flamens, or priests, — not of religion generally, but of peculiar gods. Even the priest of Jupiter (the Flamen Dialis), preceded by a lictor, and entitled by his office to the entrance of the senate, at first the especial dignitary of the patricians, was subsequently the choice of the people. The

[1] The Thessalian slave-merchants were celebrated for purloining persons of birth and education · they did not always spare those of their own country. Aristophanes sneers bitterly at that people (proverbially treacherous) for their unquenchable desire of gain by this barter of flesh.

less national and less honored deities were usually served by plebeian ministers; and many embraced the profession, as now the Roman Catholic Christians enter the monastic fraternity, less from the impulse of devotion than the suggestions of a calculating poverty. Thus Calenus, the priest of Isis, was of the lowest origin. His relations, though not his parents, were freedmen. He had received from them a liberal education, and from his father a small patrimony, which he had soon exhausted. He embraced the priesthood as a last resource from distress. Whatever the State emoluments of the sacred profession, which at that time were probably small, the officers of a popular temple could never complain of the profits of their calling. There is no profession so lucrative as that which practises on the superstition of the multitude.

Calenus had but one surviving relative at Pompeii, and that was Burbo. Various dark and disreputable ties, stronger than those of blood, united together their hearts and interests; and often the minister of Isis stole disguised and furtively from the supposed austerity of his devotions, and gliding through the back door of the retired gladiator, — a man infamous alike by vices and by profession, — rejoiced to throw off the last rag of an hypocrisy which but for the dictates of avarice, his ruling passion, would at all times have sat clumsily upon a nature too brutal for even the mimicry of virtue.

Wrapped in one of those large mantles which came in use among the Romans in proportion as they dismissed the toga, whose ample folds well concealed the form, and in which a sort of hood (attached to it) afforded no less a security to the features, Calenus now sat in the small and private chamber of the wine-cellar, whence a small passage ran at once to that back entrance with which nearly all the houses of Pompeii were furnished.

Opposite to him sat the sturdy Burbo, carefully counting on a table between them a little pile of coins which the priest had just poured from his purse; for purses were as common then as now, with this difference, — they were usually better furnished.

"You see," said Calenus, "that we pay you handsomely,

and you ought to thank me for recommending you to so advantageous a market."

"I do, my cousin, I do," replied Burbo, affectionately, as he swept the coins into a leathern receptacle, which he then deposited in his girdle, drawing the buckle round his capacious waist more closely than he was wont to do in the lax hours of his domestic avocations. "And by Isis, Pisis, and Nisis, or whatever other gods there may be in Egypt, my little Nydia is a very Hesperides, — a garden of gold to me."

"She sings well, and plays like a muse," returned Calenus; "those are virtues that he who employs me always pays liberally."

"He is a god," cried Burbo, enthusiastically; "every rich man who is generous deserves to be worshipped. But come, a cup of wine, old friend; tell me more about it. What does she do? She is frightened, talks of her oath, and reveals nothing."

"Nor will I, by my right hand! I, too, have taken that terrible oath of secrecy."

"Oath! what are oaths to men like us?"

"True, oaths of a common fashion; but this!" and the stalwart priest shuddered as he spoke. "Yet," he continued, in emptying a huge cup of unmixed wine, "I will own to thee that it is not so much the oath that I dread as the vengeance of him who proposed it. By the gods! he is a mighty sorcerer, and could draw my confession from the moon, did I dare to make it to her. Talk no more of this. By Pollux! wild as those banquets are which I enjoy with him, I am never quite at my ease there. I love, my boy, one jolly hour with thee, and one of the plain, unsophisticated, laughing girls that I meet in this chamber, all smoke-dried though it be, better than whole nights of those magnificent debauches."

"Ho! sayest thou so? To-morrow night, please the gods, we will have then a snug carousal."

"With all my heart," said the priest, rubbing his hands and drawing himself nearer to the table.

At this moment they heard a slight noise at the door, as of one feeling the handle. The priest lowered the hood over his head.



"Tush!" whispered the host, "it is but the blind girl," as Nydia opened the door and entered the apartment.

"Ho! girl, and how durst thou? Thou lookest pale, — thou hast kept late revels. No matter, the young must be always the young," said Burbo, encouragingly.

The girl made no answer, but she dropped on one of the seats with an air of lassitude. Her color went and came rapidly: she beat the floor impatiently with her small feet, then she suddenly raised her face, and said with a determined voice, —

"Master, you may starve me if you will, you may beat me, you may threaten me with death; but I will go no more to that unholy place!"

"How, fool!" said Burbo, in a savage voice, and his heavy brows met darkly over his fierce and bloodshot eyes; "how, rebellious! Take care!"

"I have said it," said the poor girl, crossing her hands on her breast.

"What! my modest one, sweet vestal, thou wilt go no more! Very well; thou shalt be carried."

"I will raise the city with my cries," said she, passionately; and the color mounted to her brow.

"We will take care of that, too; thou shalt go gagged."

"Then may the gods help me!" said Nydia, rising; "I will appeal to the magistrates."

"*Thine oath remember!*" said a hollow voice, as for the first time Calenus joined in the dialogue.

At those words a trembling shook the frame of the unfortunate girl; she clasped her hands imploringly. "Wretch that I am!" she cried, and burst violently into sobs.

Whether or not it was the sound of that vehement sorrow which brought the gentle Stratonice to the spot, her grisly form at this moment appeared in the chamber.

"How now? what hast thou been doing with my slave, brute?" said she, angrily, to Burbo.

"Be quiet, wife," said he, in a tone half sullen, half timid; "you want new girdles and fine clothes, do you? Well, then, take care of your slave, or you may want them long. *Væ capiti tuo*, — vengeance on thy head, wretched one!"

"What is this?" said the hag, looking from one to the other.

Nydia started as by a sudden impulse from the wall against which she had leaned; she threw herself at the feet of Stratonice; she embraced her knees, and looking up at her with those sightless but touching eyes, —

"Oh, my mistress," sobbed she, "you are a woman; you have had sisters; you have been young like me: feel for me, save me! I will go to those horrible feasts no more!"

"Stuff!" said the hag, dragging her up rudely by one of those delicate hands, fit for no harsher labor than that of weaving the flowers which made her pleasure or her trade; "stuff! these fine scruples are not for slaves."

"Hark ye," said Burbo, drawing forth his purse and chinking its contents; "you hear this music, wife; by Pollux! if you do not break in yon colt with a tight rein, you will hear it no more."

"The girl is tired," said Stratonice, nodding to Calenus; "she will be more docile when you next want her."

"*You! you!* who is here?" cried Nydia, casting her eyes round the apartment with so fearful and straining a survey, that Calenus rose in alarm from his seat.

"She *must* see with those eyes!" muttered he.

"Who is here? Speak, in Heaven's name! Ah, if you were blind like me, you would be less cruel," said she; and she again burst into tears.

"Take her away," said Burbo, impatiently; "I hate these whimperings."

"Come!" said Stratonice, pushing the poor child by the shoulders.

Nydia drew herself aside, with an air to which resolution gave dignity.

"Hear me," she said; "I have served you faithfully, — I, who was brought up — Ah, my mother, my poor mother! didst thou dream I should come to this?" She dashed the tears from her eyes, and proceeded: "Command me in aught else, and I will obey; but I tell you now, hard, stern, inexorable as you are, — I tell you that I will go there no more; or,

if I am forced there, that I will implore the mercy of the prætor himself: I have said it. Hear me, ye gods: I swear!"

The hag's eyes glowed with fire; she seized the child by the hair with one hand, and raised on high the other, — that formidable right hand, the least blow of which seemed capable to crush the frail and delicate form that trembled in her grasp. That thought itself appeared to strike her, for she suspended the blow, changed her purpose, and dragging Nydia to the wall, seized from a hook a rope, often, alas! applied to a similar purpose, and the next moment the shrill, the agonized shrieks of the blind girl rang piercingly through the house.

CHAPTER III.

GLAUCUS MAKES A PURCHASE THAT AFTERWARDS COSTS HIM DEAR.

"HOLLA, my brave fellows!" said Lepidus, stooping his head, as he entered the low doorway of the house of Burbo. "We have come to see which of you most honors your lanista." The gladiators rose from the table in respect to three gallants known to be among the gayest and richest youths of Pompeii, and whose voices were therefore the dispensers of amphitheatrical reputation.

"What fine animals!" said Clodius to Glaucus: "worthy to be gladiators."

"It is a pity they are not warriors," returned Glaucus.

A singular thing it was to see the dainty and fastidious Lepidus, whom in a banquet a ray of daylight seemed to blind, whom in the bath a breeze of air seemed to blast, in whom Nature seemed twisted and perverted from every natural impulse, and curdled into one dubious thing of effeminacy and art, — a singular thing was it to see this Lepidus, now all eagerness, and energy, and life, patting the vast shoulders of the gladiators with a blanched and girlish hand, feeling with a mincing gripe their great brawn and iron muscles, all lost in

calculating admiration at that manhood which he had spent his life in carefully banishing from himself.

So have we seen at this day the beardless flutterers of the saloons of London thronging round the heroes of the Fives-court; so have we seen them admire, and gaze, and calculate a bet; so have we seen them meet together, in ludicrous yet in melancholy assemblage, — the two extremes of civilized society, the patrons of pleasure and its slaves; vilest of all slaves, at once ferocious and mercenary; male prostitutes, who sell their strength as women their beauty; beasts in act, but baser than beasts in motive: for the last, at least, do not mangle themselves for money.

"Ha, Niger, how will you fight?" said Lepidus; "and with whom?"

"Sporus challenges me," said the grim giant; "we shall fight to the death, I hope."

"Ah, to be sure!" grunted Sporus, with a twinkle of his small eye.

"He takes the sword, I the net and the trident: it will be rare sport. I hope the survivor will have enough to keep up the dignity of the crown."

"Never fear, we'll fill the purse, my Hector," said Clodius: "let me see, you fight against Niger? Glaucus, a bet; I back Niger."

"I told you so," cried Niger, exultingly. "The noble Clodius knows me; count yourself dead already, my Sporus."

Clodius took out his tablet. "A bet, — ten sestertia.[1] What say you?"

"So be it," said Glaucus. "But whom have we here? I never saw this hero before;" and he glanced at Lydon, whose limbs were slighter than those of his companions, and who had something of grace, and something even of nobleness, in his face, which his profession had not yet wholly destroyed.

"It is Lydon, a youngster practised only with the wooden sword as yet," answered Niger, condescendingly. "But he has the true blood in him, and has challenged Tetraides."

"*He* challenged *me*," said Lydon: "I accept the offer."

[1] A little more than £80.

"And how do you fight?" asked Lepidus. "Chut, my boy, wait a while before you contend with Tetraides." Lydon smiled disdainfully.

"Is he a citizen or a slave?" said Clodius.

"A citizen; we are all citizens here," quoth Niger.

"Stretch out your arm, my Lydon," said Lepidus, with the air of a connoisseur.

The gladiator, with a significant glance at his companions, extended an arm which, if not so huge in its girth as those of his comrades, was so firm in its muscles, so beautifully symmetrical in its proportions, that the three visitors uttered simultaneously an admiring exclamation.

"Well, man, what is your weapon?" said Clodius, tablet in hand.

"We are to fight first with the cestus; afterwards, if both survive, with swords," returned Tetraides, sharply, and with an envious scowl.

"With the cestus!" cried Glaucus; "there you are wrong, Lydon; the cestus is the Greek fashion: I know it well. You should have encouraged flesh for that contest; you are far too thin for it: avoid the cestus."

"I cannot," said Lydon.

"And why?"

"I have said: because he has challenged me."

"But he will not hold you to the precise weapon."

"My honor holds me!" returned Lydon, proudly.

"I bet on Tetraides, two to one, at the cestus," said Clodius; "shall it be, Lepidus, — even betting, with swords?"

"If you give me three to one, I will not take the odds," said Lepidus: "Lydon will never come to the swords. You are mighty courteous."

"What say you, Glaucus?" said Clodius.

"I will take the odds three to one."

"Ten sestertia to thirty."

"Yes."[1]

[1] The reader will not confound the *sestertii* with the *sestertia*. A *sestertium*, which was a *sum*, not a *coin*, was a thousand times the value of a *sestertius*; the first was equivalent to £8 1*s*. 5½*d*., the last to 1*d* 3¾ farthings of our money.

Clodius wrote the bet in his book.

"Pardon me, noble sponsor mine," said Lydon, in a low voice to Glaucus: "but how much think you the victor will gain?"

"How much? Why, perhaps seven sestertia."

"You are sure it will be as much?"

"At least. But out on you! A Greek would have thought of the honor, and not the money. O Italians! everywhere ye are Italians!"

A blush mantled over the bronzed cheek of the gladiator.

"Do not wrong me, noble Glaucus; I think of both, but I should never have been a gladiator but for the money."

"Base! mayest thou fall! A miser never was a hero."

"I am not a miser," said Lydon, haughtily; and he withdrew to the other end of the room.

"But I don't see Burbo; where is Burbo? I must talk with Burbo," cried Clodius.

"He is within," said Niger, pointing to the door at the extremity of the room.

"And Stratonice, the brave old lass, where is she?" quoth Lepidus.

"Why she was here just before you entered; but she heard something that displeased her yonder, and vanished. Pollux! old Burbo had perhaps caught hold of some girl in the back room. I heard a female's voice crying out; the old dame is as jealous as Juno."

"Ho! excellent!" cried Lepidus, laughing. "Come, Clodius, let us go shares with Jupiter; perhaps he has caught a Leda."

At this moment a loud cry of pain and terror startled the group.

"Oh, spare me! spare me! I am but a child; I am blind; is not *that* punishment enough?"

"O Pallas! I know that voice, it is my poor flower-girl!" exclaimed Glaucus; and he darted at once into the quarter whence the cry arose.

He burst the door: he beheld Nydia writhing in the grasp of the infuriate hag; the cord, already dabbled with blood, was raised in the air: it was suddenly arrested.

"Fury!" said Glaucus, and with his left hand he caught Nydia from her grasp; "how dare you use thus a girl, — one of your own sex, a child! My Nydia, my poor infant!"

"Oh, is that you, — is that Glaucus?" exclaimed the flower-girl, in a tone almost of transport; the tears stood arrested on her cheek; she smiled, she clung to his breast, she kissed his robe as she clung.

"And how dare you, pert stranger! interfere between a free woman and her slave? By the gods! despite your fine tunic and your filthy perfumes, I doubt whether you are even a Roman citizen, my manikin."

"Fair words, mistress, fair words!" said Clodius, now entering with Lepidus. "This is my friend and sworn brother: he must be put under shelter of your tongue, sweet one; it rains stones!"

"Give me my slave!" shrieked the virago, placing her mighty grasp on the breast of the Greek.

"Not if all your sister Furies could help you," answered Glaucus. "Fear not, sweet Nydia; an Athenian never forsook distress!"

"Holla!" said Burbo, rising reluctantly, "what turmoil is all this about a slave? Let go the young gentleman, wife, — let him go: for his sake the pert thing shall be spared this once." So saying he drew, or rather dragged off his ferocious helpmate.

"Methought when we entered," said Clodius, "there was another man present?"

"He is gone."

For the priest of Isis had indeed thought it high time to vanish.

"Oh, a friend of mine, a brother cupman, a quiet dog, who does not love these snarlings," said Burbo, carelessly. "But go, child; you will tear the gentleman's tunic if you cling to him so tight: go, you are pardoned."

"Oh, do not, — do not forsake me!" cried Nydia, clinging yet closer to the Athenian.

Moved by her forlorn situation, her appeal to him, her own innumerable and touching graces, the Greek seated himself on

one of the rude chairs. He held her on his knees, he wiped the blood from her shoulders with his long hair, he kissed the tears from her cheeks, he whispered to her a thousand of those soothing words with which we calm the grief of a child; and so beautiful did he seem in his gentle and consoling task, that even the fierce heart of Stratonice was touched. His presence seemed to shed light over that base and obscene haunt; young, beautiful, glorious, he was the emblem of all that earth made most happy, comforting one that the earth had abandoned!

"Well, who could have thought our blind Nydia had been so honored!" said the virago, wiping her heated brow.

Glaucus looked up at Burbo.

"My good man," said he, "this is your slave; she sings well, she is accustomed to the care of flowers; I wish to make a present of such a slave to a lady. Will you sell her to me?" As he spoke he felt the whole frame of the poor girl tremble with delight; she started up, she put her dishevelled hair from her eyes, she looked around, as if, alas! she had the power to *see*.

"Sell our Nydia! No indeed," said Stratonice, gruffly.

Nydia sank back with a long sigh, and again clasped the robe of her protector.

"Nonsense!" said Clodius, imperiously; "you must oblige me. What, man! what, old dame! offend me, and your trade is ruined. Is not Burbo my kinsman Pansa's client? Am I not the oracle of the amphitheatre and its heroes? If I say the word, Break up your wine-jars, you sell no more. Glaucus, the slave is yours."

Burbo scratched his huge head, in evident embarrassment.

"The girl is worth her weight in gold to me."

"Name your price; I am rich," said Glaucus.

The ancient Italians were like the modern, — there was nothing they would not sell, much less a poor blind girl.

"I paid six sestertia for her; she is worth twelve now," muttered Stratonice.

"You shall have twenty; come to the magistrates at once, and then to my house for your money."

"I would not have sold the dear girl for a hundred but to oblige noble Clodius," said Burbo, whiningly. "And you will speak to Pansa about the place of *designator* at the amphitheatre, noble Clodius? It would just suit me."

"Thou shalt have it," said Clodius; adding in a whisper to Burbo, "Yon Greek can make your fortune; money runs through him like a sieve: mark to-day with white chalk, my Priam."

"*An dabis?*" said Glaucus, in the formal question of sale and barter.

"*Dabitur*," answered Burbo.

"Then, then I am to go with you — with you? Oh, happiness!" murmured Nydia.

"Pretty one, yes; and thy hardest task henceforth shall be to sing thy Grecian hymns to the loveliest lady in Pompeii."

The girl sprang from his clasp; a change came over her whole face, so bright the instant before; she sighed heavily, and then once more taking his hand, she said, —

"I thought I was to go to *your* house?"

"And so thou shalt for the present; come, we lose time."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RIVAL OF GLAUCUS PRESSES ONWARD IN THE RACE.

Ione was one of those brilliant characters which but once or twice flash across our career. She united in the highest perfection the rarest of earthly gifts, — Genius and Beauty. No one ever possessed superior intellectual qualities without knowing them. The alliteration of modesty and merit is pretty enough, but where merit is great, the veil of that modesty you admire never disguises its extent from its possessor. It is the proud consciousness of certain qualities that it cannot reveal to the every-day world, that gives to genius that shy and reserved and troubled air which puzzles and flatters you when you encounter it.

Ione, then, knew her genius; but with that charming versatility that belongs of right to women, she had the faculty so few of a kindred genius in the less malleable sex can claim, — the faculty to bend and model her graceful intellect to all whom it encountered. The sparkling fountain threw its waters alike upon the strand, the cavern, and the flowers; it refreshed, it smiled, it dazzled everywhere. That pride which is the necessary result of superiority she wore easily; in her breast it concentrated itself in independence. She pursued thus her own bright and solitary path. She asked no aged matron to direct and guide her; she walked alone by the torch of her own unflickering purity. She obeyed no tyrannical and absolute custom: she moulded custom to her own will; but this so delicately and with so feminine a grace, so perfect an exemption from error, that you could not say she *outraged* custom but *commanded* it. The wealth of her graces was inexhaustible: she beautified the commonest action; a word, a look from her, seemed magic. Love her, and you entered into a new world; you passed from this trite and commonplace earth; you were in a land in which your eyes saw everything through an enchanted medium. In her presence you felt as if listening to exquisite music; you were steeped in that sentiment which has so little of earth in it, and which music so well inspires, — that intoxication which refines and exalts, which seizes, it is true, the senses, but gives them the character of the soul.

She was peculiarly formed, then, to command and fascinate the less ordinary and the bolder natures of men; to love her was to unite two passions, — that of love and of ambition: you aspired when you adored her. It was no wonder that she had completely chained and subdued the mysterious but burning soul of the Egyptian, a man in whom dwelt the fiercest passions. Her beauty and her soul alike enthralled him.

Set apart himself from the common world, he loved that daringness of character which also made itself, among common things, aloof and alone. He did not, or he would not, see that that very isolation put her yet more from him than from the vulgar. Far as the poles, far as the night from day, his soli-

tude was divided from hers. He was solitary from his dark and solemn vices: she from her beautiful fancies and her purity of virtue.

If it was not strange that Ione thus enthralled the Egyptian, far less strange was it that she had captured, as suddenly as irrevocably, the bright and sunny heart of the Athenian. The gladness of a temperament which seemed woven from the beams of light had led Glaucus into pleasure. He obeyed no more vicious dictates when he wandered into the dissipations of his time than the exhilarating voices of youth and health. He threw the brightness of his nature over every abyss and cavern through which he strayed. His imagination dazzled him, but his heart never was corrupted. Of far more penetration than his companions deemed, he saw that they sought to prey upon his riches and his youth; but he despised wealth save as the means of enjoyment, and youth was the great sympathy that united him to them. He felt, it is true, the impulse of nobler thoughts and higher aims than in pleasure could be indulged: but the world was one vast prison, to which the Sovereign of Rome was the Imperial jailer; and the very virtues, which in the free days of Athens would have made him ambitious, in the slavery of earth made him inactive and supine. For in that unnatural and bloated civilization all that was noble in emulation was forbidden. Ambition in the regions of a despotic and luxurious court was but the contest of flattery and craft. Avarice had become the sole ambition; men desired prætorships and provinces only as the license to pillage, and government was but the excuse of rapine. It is in small States that glory is most active and pure: the more confined the limits of the circle, the more ardent the patriotism. In small States opinion is concentrated and strong: every eye reads your actions; your public motives are blended with your private ties; every spot in your narrow sphere is crowded with forms familiar since your childhood; the applause of your citizens is like the caresses of your friends. But in large States the city is but the court; the provinces — unknown to you, unfamiliar in customs, perhaps in language — have no claim on your patriotism; the ancestry of their

inhabitants is not yours. In the court you desire favor instead of glory; at a distance from the court public opinion has vanished from you, and self-interest has no counterpoise.

Italy, Italy, while I write, your skies are over me, your seas flow beneath my feet. Listen not to the blind policy which would unite all your crested cities, mourning for their republics, into one empire; false, pernicious delusion! your only hope of regeneration is in division. Florence, Milan, Venice, Genoa, may be free once more, if each is free. But dream not of freedom for the whole while you enslave the parts; the heart must be the centre of the system, the blood must circulate freely everywhere; and in vast communities you behold but a bloated and feeble giant, whose brain is imbecile, whose limbs are dead, and who pays in disease and weakness the penalty of transcending the natural proportions of health and vigor.

Thus thrown back upon themselves, the more ardent qualities of Glaucus found no vent, save in that overflowing imagination which gave grace to pleasure, and poetry to thought. Ease was less despicable than contention with parasites and slaves and luxury could yet be refined; though ambition could not be ennobled. But all that was best and brightest in his soul woke at once when he knew Ione. Here was an empire worthy of demigods to attain; here was a glory which the reeking smoke of a foul society could not soil or dim. Love, in every time, in every State, can thus find space for its golden altars. And tell me if there ever, even in the ages most favorable to glory, could be a triumph more exalted and elating than the conquest of one noble heart?

And whether it was that this sentiment inspired him, his ideas glowed more brightly, his soul seemed more awake and more visible, in Ione's presence. If natural to love her, it was natural that she should return the passion. Young, brilliant, eloquent, enamoured, and Athenian, he was to her as the incarnation of the poetry of her father's land. They were not like creatures of a world in which strife and sorrow are the elements; they were like things to be seen only in the holiday of nature, so glorious and so fresh were their youth, their beauty, and their love. They seemed out of place in the

harsh and every-day earth; they belonged of right to the Saturnian age, and the dreams of demigod and nymph. It was as if the poetry of life gathered and fed itself in them, and in their hearts were concentrated the last rays of the sun of Delos and of Greece.

But if Ione was independent in her choice of life, so was her modest pride proportionably vigilant and easily alarmed. The falsehood of the Egyptian was invented by a deep knowledge of her nature. The story of coarseness, of indelicacy, in Glaucus, stung her to the quick. She felt it a reproach upon her character and her career, a punishment above all to her love; she felt, for the first time, how suddenly she had yielded to that love; she blushed with shame at a weakness, the extent of which she was startled to perceive: she imagined it was that weakness which had incurred the contempt of Glaucus; she endured the bitterest curse of noble natures, — *humiliation!* Yet her love, perhaps, was no less alarmed than her pride. If one moment she murmured reproaches upon Glaucus, — if one moment she renounced, she almost hated him, — at the next she burst into passionate tears, her heart yielded to its softness, and she said in the bitterness of anguish, "He despises me; he does not love me."

From the hour the Egyptian had left her she had retired to her most secluded chamber, she had shut out her handmaids, she had denied herself to the crowds that besieged her door. Glaucus was excluded with the rest; he wondered, but he guessed not why. He never attributed to his Ione, his queen, his goddess, that woman-like caprice of which the love-poets of Italy so unceasingly complain. He imagined her, in the majesty of her candor, above all the arts that torture. He was troubled, but his hopes were not dimmed, for he knew already that he loved and was beloved; what more could he desire as an amulet against fear?

At deepest night, then, when the streets were hushed, and the high moon only beheld his devotions, he stole to that temple of his heart, — her home,[1] — and wooed her after the beautiful fashion of his country. He covered her threshold with

[1] Athenæus: "The true temple of Cupid is the house of the beloved one."

the richest garlands, in which every flower was a volume of sweet passion; and he charmed the long summer night with the sound of the Lycian lute, and verses which the inspiration of the moment sufficed to weave.

But the window above opened not; no smile made yet more holy the shining air of night. All was still and dark. He knew not if his verse was welcome and his suit was heard.

Yet Ione slept not, nor disdained to hear. Those soft strains ascended to her chamber; they soothed, they subdued her. While she listened, she believed nothing against her lover; but when they were stilled at last, and his step departed, the spell ceased, and in the bitterness of her soul she almost conceived in that delicate flattery a new affront.

I said she was denied to all; but there was one exception; there was one person who would not be denied, assuming over her actions and her house something like the authority of a parent: Arbaces, for himself, claimed an exemption from all the ceremonies observed by others. He entered the threshold with the license of one who feels that he is privileged and at home. He made his way to her solitude, and with that sort of quiet and unapologetic air which seemed to consider the right as a thing of course. With all the independence of Ione's character, his heart had enabled him to obtain a secret and powerful control over her mind. She could not shake it off; sometimes she desired to do so, but she never actively struggled against it. She was fascinated by his serpent eye. He arrested, he commanded her by the magic of a mind long accustomed to awe and to subdue. Utterly unaware of his real character or his hidden love, she felt for him the reverence which genius feels for wisdom, and virtue for sanctity. She regarded him as one of those mighty sages of old who attained to the mysteries of knowledge by an exemption from the passions of their kind. She scarcely considered him as a being, like herself, of the earth, but as an oracle at once dark and sacred. She did not love him, but she feared. His presence was unwelcome to her; it dimmed her spirit even in its brightest mood; he seemed, with his chilling and lofty aspect, like some eminence which casts a shadow over the sun. But



she never thought of forbidding his visits. She was passive under the influence which created in her breast, not the repugnance, but something of the stillness of terror.

Arbaces himself now resolved to exert all his arts to possess himself of that treasure he so burningly coveted. He was cheered and elated by his conquests over her brother. From the hour in which Apæcides fell beneath the voluptuous sorcery of that *fête* which we have described, he felt his empire over the young priest triumphant and insured. He knew that there is no victim so thoroughly subdued as a young and fervent man for the first time delivered to the thraldom of the senses.

When Apæcides recovered, with the morning light, from the profound sleep which succeeded to the delirium of wonder and of pleasure, he was, it is true, ashamed, terrified, appalled. His vows of austerity and celibacy echoed in his ear; his thirst after holiness, — had it been quenched at so unhallowed a stream? But Arbaces knew well the means by which to confirm his conquest. From the arts of pleasure he led the young priest at once to those of his mysterious wisdom. He bared to his amazed eyes the initiatory secrets of the sombre philosophy of the Nile, — those secrets plucked from the stars, and the wild chemistry, which, in those days, when Reason herself was but the creature of Imagination, might well pass for the lore of a diviner magic. He seemed to the young eyes of the priest as a being above mortality, and endowed with supernatural gifts. That yearning and intense desire for the knowledge which is not of earth, which had burned from his boyhood in the heart of the priest, was dazzled until it confused and mastered his clearer sense. He gave himself to the art which thus addressed at once the two strongest of human passions, — that of pleasure and that of knowledge. He was loth to believe that one so wise could err, that one so lofty could stoop to deceive. Entangled in the dark web of metaphysical moralities, he caught at the excuse by which the Egyptian converted vice into a virtue. His pride was insensibly flattered that Arbaces had deigned to rank him with himself, to set him apart from the laws

which bound the vulgar, to make him an august participator, both in the mystic studies and the magic fascinations of the Egyptian's solitude. The pure and stern lessons of that creed to which Olinthus had sought to make him convert were swept away from his memory by the deluge of new passions; and the Egyptian, who was versed in the articles of that true faith, and who soon learned from his pupil the effect which had been produced upon him by his believers, sought, not unskilfully, to undo that effect by a tone of reasoning half sarcastic and half earnest.

"This faith," said he, "is but a borrowed plagiarism from one of the many allegories invented by our priests of old. Observe," he added, pointing to a hieroglyphical scroll, — "observe in these ancient figures the origin of the Christian's Trinity. Here are also three gods, — the Deity, the Spirit, and the Son. Observe, that the epithet of the Son is 'Saviour;' observe that the sign by which his human qualities are denoted is the cross.[1] Note here, too, the mystic history of Osiris: how he put on death; how he lay in the grave; and how, thus fulfilling a solemn atonement, he rose again from the dead! In these stories we but design to paint an allegory from the operations of nature and the evolutions of the eternal heavens. But the allegory unknown, the types themselves have furnished to credulous nations the materials of many creeds. They have travelled to the vast plains of India; they have mixed themselves up in the visionary speculations of the Greek: becoming more and more gross and embodied, as they emerge farther from the shadows of their antique origin, they have assumed a human and palpable form in this novel faith; and the believers of Galilee are but the unconscious repeaters of one of the superstitions of the Nile."

This was the last argument, which completely subdued the priest. It was necessary to him, as to all, to believe in something; and undivided, and at last unreluctant, he surrendered himself to that belief which Arbaces inculcated, and which all that was human in passion, all that was flattering in vanity,

[1] The believer will draw from this vague coincidence a very different corollary from that of the Egyptian.

all that was alluring in pleasure, served to invite to, and contributed to confirm.

This conquest thus easily made, the Egyptian could now give himself wholly up to the pursuit of a far dearer and mightier object; and he hailed, in his success with the brother, an omen of his triumph over the sister.

He had seen Ione on the day following the revel we have witnessed, and which was also the day after he had poisoned her mind against his rival. The next day, and the next, he saw her also; and each time he laid himself out with consummate art, partly to confirm her impression against Glaucus, and principally to prepare her for the impressions he desired her to receive. The proud Ione took care to conceal the anguish she endured, and the pride of woman has an hypocrisy which can deceive the most penetrating and shame the most astute; but Arbaces was no less cautious not to recur to a subject which he felt it was most politic to treat as of the lightest importance. He knew that by dwelling much upon the fault of a rival, you only give him dignity in the eyes of your mistress; the wisest plan is, neither loudly to hate, nor bitterly to contemn; the wisest plan is to lower him by an indifference of tone, as if you could not dream that *he* could be loved. Your safety is in concealing the wound to your own pride, and imperceptibly alarming that of the umpire, whose voice is fate! Such, in all times, will be the policy of one who knows the science of the sex: it was now the Egyptian's.

He recurred no more, then, to the presumption of Glaucus; he mentioned his name, but not more often than that of Clodius or of Lepidus. He affected to class them together as things of a low and ephemeral species; as things wanting nothing of the butterfly save its innocence and its grace. Sometimes he slightly alluded to some invented debauch, in which he declared them companions; sometimes he adverted to them as the antipodes of those lofty and spiritual natures to whose order that of Ione belonged. Blinded alike by the pride of Ione, and, perhaps, by his own, he dreamed not that she already loved; but he dreaded lest she might have formed

for Glaucus the first fluttering prepossessions that *lead* to love. And secretly he ground his teeth in rage and jealousy when he reflected on the youth, the fascinations, and the brilliancy of that formidable rival whom he pretended to undervalue.

It was on the fourth day from the date of the close of the previous book that Arbaces and Ione sat together.

"You wear your veil at home," said the Egyptian; "that is not fair to those whom you honor with your friendship."

"But to Arbaces," answered Ione, who, indeed, had cast the veil over her features to conceal eyes red with weeping, — "to Arbaces, who looks only to the mind, what matters it that the face is concealed?"

"I do look only to the mind," replied the Egyptian: "show me then your face, for there I shall see it!"

"You grow gallant in the air of Pompeii," said Ione, with a forced tone of gayety.

"Do you think, fair Ione, that it is only at Pompeii that I have learned to value you?" The Egyptian's voice trembled; he paused for a moment, and then resumed.

"There is a love, beautiful Greek, which is not the love only of the thoughtless and the young, — there is a love which sees not with the eyes, which hears not with the ears, but in which soul is enamoured of soul. The countryman of thy ancestors, the cave-nursed Plato, dreamed of such a love: his followers have sought to imitate it; but it is a love that is not for the herd to echo; it is a love that only high and noble natures can conceive; it hath nothing in common with the sympathies and ties of coarse affection; wrinkles do not revolt it, homeliness of feature does not deter; it asks youth, it is true, but it asks it only in the freshness of the emotions; it asks beauty, it is true, but it is the beauty of the thought and of the spirit. Such is the love, O Ione, which is a worthy offering to thee from the cold and the austere. Austere and cold thou deemest me: such is the love that I venture to lay upon thy shrine; thou canst receive it without a blush."

"And its name is Friendship," replied Ione. Her answer was innocent, yet it sounded like the reproof of one conscious of the design of the speaker.

"Friendship!" said Arbaces, vehemently. "No; that is a word too often profaned to apply to a sentiment so sacred. Friendship! it is a tie that binds fools and profligates! Friendship! it is the bond that unites the frivolous hearts of a Glaucus and a Clodius! Friendship! no, *that* is an affection of earth, of vulgar habits and sordid sympathies. The feeling of which I speak is borrowed from the stars;[1] it partakes of that mystic and ineffable yearning which we feel when we gaze on them; it burns, yet it purifies; it is the lamp of naphtha in the alabaster vase, glowing with fragrant odors, but shining only through the purest vessels. No; it is not love, and it is not friendship, that Arbaces feels for Ione. Give it no name, — earth has no name for it; it is not of earth: why debase it with earthly epithets and earthly associations?"

Never before had Arbaces ventured so far, yet he felt his ground step by step: he knew that he uttered a language which, if at this day of affected platonisms it would speak unequivocally to the ears of beauty, was at that time strange and unfamiliar, to which no precise idea could be attached, from which he could imperceptibly advance or recede, as occasion suited, as hope encouraged or fear deterred. Ione trembled, though she knew not why; her veil hid her features, and masked an expression, which, if seen by the Egyptian, would have at once damped and enraged him; in fact, he never was more displeasing to her: the harmonious modulation of the most suasive voice that ever disguised unhallowed thought fell discordantly on her ear. Her whole soul was still filled with the image of Glaucus, and the accent of tenderness from another only revolted and dismayed; yet she did not conceive that any passion more ardent than that platonism which Arbaces expressed lurked beneath his words. She thought that he, in truth, spoke only of the affection and sympathy of the soul; but was it not precisely that affection and that sympathy which had made a part of those emotions she felt for Glaucus; and could any other footstep than his approach the haunted adytum of her heart?

[1] Plato.

Anxious at once to change the conversation, she replied, therefore, with a cold and indifferent voice: "Whomsoever Arbaces honors with the sentiment of esteem, it is natural that his elevated wisdom should color that sentiment with its own hues; it is natural that his friendship should be purer than that of others, whose pursuits and errors he does not deign to share. But tell me, Arbaces, hast thou seen my brother of late? He has not visited me for several days; and when I last saw him his manner disturbed and alarmed me much. I fear lest he was too precipitate in the severe choice that he has adopted, and that he repents an irrevocable step."

"Be cheered, Ione," replied the Egyptian. "It is true that some little time since he was troubled and sad of spirit; those doubts beset him which were likely to haunt one of that fervent temperament, which ever ebbs and flows, and vibrates between excitement and exhaustion. But *he*, Ione, *he* came to me in his anxieties and his distress; he sought one who pitied and loved him. I have calmed his mind, I have removed his doubts, I have taken him from the threshold of Wisdom into its temple; and before the majesty of the goddess his soul is hushed and soothed. Fear not, he will repent no more; they who trust themselves to Arbaces never repent but for a moment."

"You rejoice me," answered Ione. "My dear brother! in his contentment I am happy."

The conversation then turned upon lighter subjects; the Egyptian exerted himself to please, he condescended even to entertain; the vast variety of his knowledge enabled him to adorn and light up every subject on which he touched; and Ione, forgetting the displeasing effect of his former words, was carried away, despite her sadness, by the magic of his intellect. Her manner became unrestrained and her language fluent; and Arbaces, who had waited his opportunity, now hastened to seize it.

"You have never seen," said he, "the interior of my home; it may amuse you to do so: it contains some rooms that may explain to you what you have often asked me to describe, —

the fashion of an Egyptian house; not, indeed, that you will perceive in the poor and minute proportions of Roman architecture the massive strength, the vast space, the gigantic magnificence, or even the domestic construction of the palaces of Thebes and Memphis; but something there is, here and there, that may serve to express to you some notion of that antique civilization which has humanized the world. Devote, then, to the austere friend of your youth, one of these bright summer evenings, and let me boast that my gloomy mansion has been honored with the presence of the admired Ione."

Unconscious of the pollutions of the mansion, of the danger that awaited her, Ione readily assented to the proposal. The next evening was fixed for the visit; and the Egyptian, with a serene countenance, and a heart beating with fierce and unholy joy, departed. Scarce had he gone, when another visitor claimed admission. — But now we return to Glaucus.

CHAPTER V.

THE POOR TORTOISE. — NEW CHANGES FOR NYDIA.

THE morning sun shone over the small and odorous garden enclosed within the peristyle of the house of the Athenian. He lay reclined, sad and listlessly, on the smooth grass which intersected the viridarium, and a slight canopy stretched above broke the fierce rays of the summer sun.

When that fairy manison was first disinterred from the earth they found in the garden the shell of a tortoise that had been its inmate.[1] That animal, so strange a link in the creation, to which Nature seems to have denied all the pleasures of life, save life's passive and dreamlike perception, had been the guest of the place for years before Glaucus purchased it, — for years, indeed, which went beyond the memory of man, and to

[1] I do not know whether it be still preserved (I hope so), but the shell of a tortoise was found in the house appropriated, in this work, to Glaucus.

which tradition assigned an almost incredible date. The house had been built and rebuilt, its possessors had changed and fluctuated, generations had flourished and decayed, and still the tortoise dragged on its slow and unsympathizing existence. In the earthquake, which sixteen years before had overthrown many of the public buildings of the city, and scared away the amazed inhabitants, the house now inhabited by Glaucus had been terribly shattered. The possessors deserted it for many days; on their return they cleared away the ruins which encumbered the viridarium, and found still the tortoise, unharmed, and unconscious of the surrounding destruction. It seemed to bear a charmed life in its languid blood and imperceptible motions; yet was it not so inactive as it seemed: it held a regular and monotonous course; inch by inch it traversed the little orbit of its domain, taking months to accomplish the whole gyration. It was a restless voyager, that tortoise! patiently, and with pain, did it perform its self-appointed journeys, evincing no interest in the things around it, — a philosopher concentred in itself. There was something grand in its solitary selfishness: the sun in which it basked, the waters poured daily over it, the air, which it insensibly inhaled, were its sole and unfailing luxuries. The mild changes of the season in that lovely clime affected it not. It covered itself with its shell, as the saint in his piety, as the sage in his wisdom, as the lover in his hope.

It was impervious to the shocks and mutations of time, it was an emblem of time itself, — slow, regular, perpetual, unwitting of the passions that fret themselves around, of the wear and tear of mortality. The poor tortoise! nothing less than the bursting of volcanoes, the convulsions of the riven world, could have quenched its sluggish spark! The inexorable Death, that spared not pomp or beauty, passed unheedingly by a thing to which death could bring so insignificant a change.

For this animal the mercurial and vivid Greek felt all the wonder and affection of contrast. He could spend hours in surveying its creeping progress, in moralizing over its mechanism. He despised it in joy; he envied it in sorrow.

Regarding it now as he lay along the sward, its dull mass moving while it seemed motionless, the Athenian murmured to himself: —

"The eagle dropped a stone from his talons, thinking to break thy shell: the stone crushed the head of a poet. This is the allegory of Fate! Dull thing! thou hadst a father and a mother; perhaps, ages ago, thou thyself hadst a mate. Did thy parents love, or didst thou? Did thy slow blood circulate more gladly when thou didst creep to the side of thy wedded one? Wert thou capable of affection? Could it distress thee if she were away from thy side? Couldst thou feel when she was present? What would I not give to know the history of thy mailed breast, to gaze upon the mechanism of thy faint desires, to mark what hairbreadth difference separates thy sorrow from thy joy! Yet, methinks, thou wouldst know if Ione were present! Thou wouldst feel her coming like a happier air, like a gladder sun. I envy thee now, for thou knowest not that she is absent; and I — would I could be like thee between the intervals of seeing her! What doubt, what presentiment, haunts me! Why will she not admit me? Days have passed since I heard her voice. For the first time, life grows flat to me. I am as one who is left alone at a banquet, the lights dead and the flowers faded. Ah, Ione, couldst thou dream how I adore thee!"

From these enamoured reveries Glaucus was interrupted by the entrance of Nydia. She came with her light though cautious step along the marble tablinum. She passed the portico, and paused at the flowers which bordered the garden. She had her water-vase in her hand, and she sprinkled the thirsting plants, which seemed to brighten at her approach. She bent to inhale their odor; she touched them timidly and caressingly; she felt along their stems, if any withered leaf or creeping insect marred their beauty. And as she hovered from flower to flower, with her earnest and youthful countenance and graceful motions, you could not have imagined a fitter handmaid for the goddess of the garden.

"Nydia, my child!" said Glaucus.

At the sound of his voice she paused at once, — listening, blushing, breathless; with her lips parted, her face upturned to catch the direction of the sound, she laid down the vase, she hastened to him; and wonderful it was to see how unerringly she threaded her dark way through the flowers, and came by the shortest path to the side of her new lord.

"Nydia," said Glaucus, tenderly stroking back her long and beautiful hair, "it is now three days since thou hast been under the protection of my household gods. Have they smiled on thee? Art thou happy?"

"Ah, so happy!" sighed the slave.

"And now," continued Glaucus, "that thou hast recovered somewhat from the hateful recollections of thy former state, and now that they have fitted thee [touching her broidered tunic] with garments more meet for thy delicate shape, and now, sweet child, that thou hast accustomed thyself to a happiness which may the gods grant thee ever, I am about to pray at thy hands a boon."

"Oh, what can I do for thee?" said Nydia, clasping her hands.

"Listen," said Glaucus, "and, young as thou art, thou shalt be my confidante. Hast thou ever heard the name of Ione?"

The blind girl gasped for breath, and turning pale as one of the statues which shone upon them from the peristyle, she answered with an effort, and after a moment's pause, —

"Yes; I have heard that she is of Neapolis, and beautiful."

"Beautiful! Her beauty is a thing to dazzle the day! Neapolis! nay, she is Greek by origin; Greece only could furnish forth such shapes. Nydia, I love her!"

"I thought so," replied Nydia, calmly.

"I love, and thou shalt tell her so. I am about to send thee to her. Happy Nydia, thou wilt be in her chamber, thou wilt drink the music of her voice, thou wilt bask in the sunny air of her presence!"

"What! what! wilt thou send me from thee?"

"Thou wilt go to Ione," answered Glaucus, in a tone that said, "What more canst thou desire?"

Nydia burst into tears.



Glaucus, raising himself, drew her towards him with the soothing caresses of a brother.

"My child, my Nydia, thou weepest in ignorance of the happiness I bestow on thee. She is gentle and kind, and soft as the breeze of spring. She will be a sister to thy youth, she will appreciate thy winning talents, she will love thy simple graces as none other could, for they are like her own. Weepest thou still, fond fool? I will not force thee, sweet. Wilt thou not do for me this kindness?"

"Well, if I can serve thee, command. See, I weep no longer; I am calm."

"That is my own Nydia," continued Glaucus, kissing her hand. "Go, then, to her: if thou art disappointed in her kindness, — if I have deceived thee, — return when thou wilt. I do not *give* thee to another; I but lend. My home ever be thy refuge, sweet one. Ah, would it could shelter all the friendless and distressed! But if my heart whispers truly, I shall claim thee again soon, my child. My home and Ione's will become the same, and thou shalt dwell with both."

A shiver passed through the slight frame of the blind girl, but she wept no more; she was resigned.

"Go, then, my Nydia, to Ione's house; they shall show thee the way. Take her the fairest flowers thou canst pluck; the vase which contains them I will give thee: thou must excuse its unworthiness. Thou shalt take, too, with thee the lute that I gave thee yesterday, and from which thou knowest so well to awaken the charming spirit. Thou shalt give her also this letter, in which, after a hundred efforts, I have embodied something of my thoughts. Let thy ear catch every accent, every modulation of her voice, and tell me, when we meet again, if its music should flatter me or discourage. It is now, Nydia, some days since I have been admitted to Ione; there is something mysterious in this exclusion. I am distracted with doubts and fears; learn, — for thou art quick, and thy care for me will sharpen tenfold thy acuteness, — learn the cause of this unkindness; speak of me as often as thou canst; let my name come ever to thy lips; *insinuate* how I love rather than *proclaim* it; watch if she sighs whilst thou speakest; if she

answer thee; or, if she reproves, in what accents she reproves. Be my friend, plead for me; and ah, how vastly wilt thou overpay the little I have done for thee! Thou comprehendest, Nydia; thou art yet a child, — have I said more than thou canst understand?"

"No."

"And thou wilt serve me?"

"Yes."

"Come to me when thou hast gathered the flowers, and I will give thee the vase I spake of; seek me in the chamber of Leda. Pretty one, thou dost not grieve now?"

"Glaucus, I am a slave; what business have I with grief or joy?"

"Sayest thou so? No, Nydia, be free. I give thee freedom; enjoy it as thou wilt, and pardon me that I reckoned on thy desire to serve me."

"You are offended. Oh, I would not, for that which no freedom can give, offend you, Glaucus! My guardian, my saviour, my protector, forgive the poor blind girl! She does not grieve, even in leaving thee, if she can contribute to thy happiness."

"May the gods bless this grateful heart!" said Glaucus, greatly moved; and, unconscious of the fires he excited, he repeatedly kissed her forehead.

"Thou forgivest me," said she, "and thou wilt talk no more of freedom; my happiness is to be thy slave: thou hast promised thou wilt not give me to another."

"I have promised."

"And now, then, I will gather the flowers."

Silently Nydia took from the hand of Glaucus the costly and jewelled vase, in which the flowers vied with each other in hue and fragrance; tearlessly she received his parting admonition. She paused for a moment when his voice ceased; she did not trust herself to reply; she sought his hand; she raised it to her lips, dropped her veil over her face, and passed at once from his presence. She paused again as she reached the threshold; she stretched her hands towards it, and murmured, —

"Three happy days — days of unspeakable delight — have I

known since I passed thee, blessed threshold! May peace dwell ever with thee when I am gone! And now, my heart tears itself from thee, and the only sound it utters bids me — die!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE HAPPY BEAUTY AND THE BLIND SLAVE.

A SLAVE entered the chamber of Ione. A messenger from Glaucus desired to be admitted.

Ione hesitated an instant.

"She is blind, that messenger," said the slave; "she will do her commission to none but thee."

Base is that heart which does not respect affliction! The moment she heard the messenger was blind, Ione felt the impossibility of returning a chilling reply. Glaucus had chosen a herald that was indeed sacred, — a herald that could not be denied.

"What can he want with me? what message can he send?" and the heart of Ione beat quick. The curtain across the door was withdrawn; a soft and echoless step fell upon the marble; and Nydia, led by one of the attendants, entered with her precious gift.

She stood still a moment, as if listening for some sound that might direct her.

"Will the noble Ione," said she, in a soft and low voice, "deign to speak, that I may know whither to steer these benighted steps, and that I may lay my offerings at her feet?"

"Fair child," said Ione, touched and soothingly, "give not thyself the pain to cross these slippery floors; my attendant will bring to me what thou hast to present;" and she motioned to the handmaid to take the vase.

"I may give these flowers to none but thee," answered Nydia; and, guided by her ear, she walked slowly to the place where Ione sat, and kneeling when she came before her, proffered the vase.

Ione took it from her hand, and placed it on the table at her side. She then raised her gently, and would have seated her on the couch, but the girl modestly resisted.

"I have not yet discharged my office," said she; and she drew the letter of Glaucus from her vest. "This will, perhaps, explain why he who sent me chose so unworthy a messenger to Ione."

The Neapolitan took the letter with a hand, the trembling of which Nydia at once felt and sighed to feel. With folded arms and downcast looks, she stood before the proud and stately form of Ione; no less proud, perhaps, in her attitude of submission. Ione waved her hand, and the attendants withdrew; she gazed again upon the form of the young slave in surprise and beautiful compassion; then, retiring a little from her, she opened and read the following letter: —

"Glaucus to Ione sends more than he dares to utter. Is Ione ill? Thy slaves tell me 'No,' and that assurance comforts me. Has Glaucus offended Ione? Ah! that question I may not ask from them. For five days I have been banished from thy presence. Has the sun shone? I know it not. Has the sky smiled? It has had no smile for me. My sun and my sky are Ione. Do I offend thee? Am I too bold? Did I say that on the tablet which my tongue has hesitated to breathe? Alas! it is in thine absence that I feel most the spells by which thou hast subdued me. And absence, that deprives me of joy, brings me courage. Thou wilt not see me; thou hast banished also the common flatterers that flock around thee. Canst thou confound me with them? It is not possible! Thou knowest too well that I am not of them, — that their clay is not mine. For even were I of the humblest mould, the fragrance of the rose has penetrated me, and the spirit of thy nature hath passed within me, to embalm, to sanctify, to inspire. Have they slandered me to thee, Ione? Thou wilt not believe them. Did the Delphic oracle itself tell me thou wert unworthy, I would not believe it; and am I less incredulous than thou? I think of the last time we met, of the song which I sang to thee, of the look that thou gavest me in return. Disguise it as thou wilt, Ione, there is something kindred between us, and our eyes acknowledged it, though our lips were silent. Deign to see me, to listen to me, and after that exclude me if thou wilt. I meant not so soon to say I loved. But those words rush to my heart; they will have way. Accept, then, my homage and my vows. We

met first at the shrine of Pallas; shall we not meet before a softer and a more ancient altar?

"Beautiful, adored Ione! If my hot youth and my Athenian blood have misguided and allured me, they have but taught my wanderings to appreciate the rest, the haven they have attained. I hang up my dripping robes on the Sea-god's shrine. I have escaped shipwreck. I have found THEE. Ione, deign to see me; thou art gentle to strangers, wilt thou be less merciful to those of thine own land? I await thy reply. Accept the flowers which I send; their sweet breath has a language more eloquent than words. They take from the sun the odors they return; they are the emblem of the love that receives and repays tenfold, — the emblem of the heart that drunk thy rays, and owes to thee the germ of the treasures that it proffers to thy smile. I send these by one whom thou wilt receive for her own sake, if not for mine. She, like us, is a stranger; her father's ashes lie under brighter skies; but, less happy than we, she is blind and a slave. Poor Nydia! I seek as much as possible to repair to her the cruelties of Nature and of Fate, in asking permission to place her with thee. She is gentle, quick, and docile. She is skilled in music and the song; and she is a very Chloris[1] to the flowers. She thinks, Ione, that thou wilt love her: if thou dost not, send her back to me.

"One word more: let me be bold, Ione. Why thinkest thou so highly of yon dark Egyptian? he hath not about him the air of honest men. We Greeks learn mankind from our cradle: we are not the less profound, in that we affect no sombre mien: our lips smile, but our eyes are grave, — they observe, they note, they study. Arbaces is not one to be credulously trusted: can it be that he hath wronged me to thee? I think it, for I left him with thee; thou sawest how my presence stung him; since then thou hast not admitted me. Believe nothing that he can say to my disfavor; if thou dost, tell me so at once; for this Ione owes to Glaucus. Farewell! this letter touches thy hand; these characters meet thine eyes: shall they be more blessed than he who is their author? Once more farewell!"

It seemed to Ione, as she read this letter, as if a mist had fallen from her eyes. What had been the supposed offence of Glaucus? That he had not really loved! And now, plainly, and in no dubious terms, he confessed that love. From that moment his power was fully restored. At every tender word in that letter, so full of romantic and trustful passion, her

[1] The Greek Flora.

heart smote her. And had she doubted his faith, and had she believed another; and had she not, at least, allowed to him the culprit's right to know his crime, to plead in his defence? The tears rolled down her cheeks, she kissed the letter, she placed it in her bosom; and turning to Nydia, who stood in the same place and in the same posture, —

"Wilt thou sit, my child," said she, "while I write an answer to this letter?"

"You will answer it, then!" said Nydia, coldly. "Well, the slave that accompanied me will take back your answer."

"For you," said Ione, "stay with me; trust me, your service shall be light."

Nydia bowed her head.

"What is your name, fair girl?"

"They call me Nydia."

"Your country?"

"The land of Olympus, — Thessaly."

"Thou shalt be to me a friend," said Ione, caressingly, "as thou art already half a countrywoman. Meanwhile, I beseech thee, stand not on these cold and glassy marbles. There! now that thou art seated, I can leave thee for an instant."

"Ione to Glaucus greeting: Come to me, Glaucus [wrote Ione], — come to me to-morrow. I may have been unjust to thee, but I will tell thee, at least, the fault that has been imputed to thy charge. Fear not henceforth the Egyptian; fear none. Thou sayest thou hast expressed too much: alas! in these hasty words I have already done so. Farewell!"

As Ione reappeared with the letter, which she did not dare to read after she had written (ah, common rashness, common timidity of love!), Nydia started from her seat.

"You have written to Glaucus?"

"I have."

"And will he thank the messenger who gives to him thy letter?"

Ione forgot her companion was blind; she blushed from the brow to the neck, and remained silent.

"I mean this," added Nydia in a calmer tone; "the lightest

word of coldness from thee will sadden him, the lightest kindness will rejoice. If it be the first, let the slave take back thine answer; if it be the last, let me. I will return this evening."

"And why, Nydia," asked Ione, evasively, "wouldst thou be the bearer of my letter?"

"It is so, then!" said Nydia. "Ah! how could it be otherwise; who could be unkind to Glaucus?"

"My child," said Ione, a little more reservedly than before, "thou speakest warmly. Glaucus, then, is amiable in thine eyes?"

"Noble Ione, Glaucus has been that to me which neither fortune nor the gods have been, — *a friend!*"

The sadness, mingled with dignity, with which Nydia uttered these simple words affected the beautiful Ione; she bent down and kissed her. "Thou art grateful, and deservedly so; why should I blush to say that Glaucus is worthy of thy gratitude? Go, my Nydia; take to him thyself this letter, but return again. If I am from home when thou returnest, — as this evening, perhaps, I shall be, — thy chamber shall be prepared next my own. Nydia, I have no sister: wilt thou be one to me?"

The Thessalian kissed the hand of Ione, and then said, with some embarrassment, —

"One favor, fair Ione; may I dare to ask it?"

"Thou canst not ask what I will not grant," replied the Neapolitan.

"They tell me," said Nydia, "that thou art beautiful beyond the loveliness of earth. Alas! I cannot see that which gladdens the world. Wilt thou suffer me, then, to pass my hand over thy face? That is my sole criterion of beauty, and I usually guess aright."

She did not wait for the answer of Ione, but, as she spoke, gently and slowly passed her hand over the bending and half-averted features of the Greek, — features which but one image in the world can yet depicture and recall: that image is the mutilated but all-wondrous statue in her native city, her own Neapolis; that Parian face, before which all the beauty of the

Florentine Venus is poor and earthly; that aspect so full of harmony, of youth, of genius, of the soul, which modern critics have supposed the representation of Psyche.[1]

Her touch lingered over the braided hair and polished brow, over the downy and damask cheek, over the dimpled lip, the swan-like and whitish neck. "I know now that thou art beautiful," she said, "and I can picture thee to my darkness henceforth and forever."

When Nydia left her, Ione sank into a deep but delicious reverie. Glaucus, then, loved her; he owned it, — yes, he loved her. She drew forth again that dear confession; she paused over every word, she kissed every line; she did not ask why he had been maligned, she only felt assured that he had been so. She wondered how she had ever believed a syllable against him; she wondered how the Egyptian had been enabled to exercise a power against Glaucus; she felt a chill creep over her as she again turned to his warning against Arbaces, and her secret fear of that gloomy being darkened into awe. She was awakened from these thoughts by her maidens, who came to announce to her that the hour appointed to visit Arbaces was arrived; she started: she had forgotten the promise. Her first impression was to renounce it; her second was to laugh at her own fears of her eldest surviving friend. She hastened to add the usual ornaments to her dress, and, doubtful whether she should yet question the Egyptian more closely with respect to his accusation of Glaucus, or whether she should wait till, without citing the authority, she should insinuate to Glaucus the accusation itself, she took her way to the gloomy mansion of Arbaces.

[1] The wonderful remains of the statue so called in the Museo Borbonico. The face, for sentiment and for feature, is the most beautiful of all which ancient sculpture has bequeathed to us.

CHAPTER VII.

IONE ENTRAPPED. — THE MOUSE TRIES TO GNAW THE NET.

"O DEAREST Nydia!" exclaimed Glaucus as he read the letter of Ione, "whitest-robed messenger that ever passed between earth and heaven, how, how shall I thank thee?"

"I am rewarded," said the poor Thessalian.

"To-morrow, — to-morrow! How shall I while the hours till then?"

The enamoured Greek would not let Nydia escape him, though she sought several times to leave the chamber. He made her recite to him over and over again every syllable of the brief conversation that had taken place between her and Ione; a thousand times, forgetting her misfortune, he questioned her of the looks, of the countenance of his beloved; and then quickly again excusing his fault, he bade her recommence the whole recital which he had thus interrupted. The hours thus painful to Nydia passed rapidly and delightfully to him, and the twilight had already darkened ere he once more dismissed her to Ione with a fresh letter and with new flowers. Scarcely had she gone, than Clodius and several of his gay companions broke in upon him: they rallied him on his seclusion during the whole day, and his absence from his customary haunts; they invited him to accompany them to the various resorts in that lively city, which night and day proffered diversity to pleasure. Then, as now, in the south (for no land, perhaps, losing more of greatness has retained more of custom), it was the delight of the Italians to assemble in the evening; and, under the porticos of temples, or the shade of the groves that interspersed the streets, listening to music or the recitals of some inventive tale-teller, they hailed the rising moon with libations of wine and the melodies of song. Glaucus was too happy to be unsocial; he longed to cast off the exuberance of joy that oppressed him. He willingly accepted the proposal of his comrades, and laugh-

ingly they sallied out together down the populous and glittering streets.

In the mean time Nydia once more gained the house of Ione, who had long left it; she inquired indifferently whither Ione had gone.

The answer arrested and appalled her.

"To the house of Arbaces, — of the Egyptian? Impossible!"

"It is true, my little one," said the slave, who had replied to her question. "She has known the Egyptian long."

"Long! ye gods, yet Glaucus loves her!" murmured Nydia to herself. "And has," asked she aloud, — "has she often visited him before?"

"Never till now," answered the slave. "If all the rumored scandal of Pompeii be true, it would be better, perhaps, if she had not ventured there at present. But she, poor mistress mine, hears nothing of that which reaches us; the talk of the vestibulum reaches not to the peristyle."[1]

"Never till now!" repeated Nydia. "Art thou sure?"

"Sure, pretty one; but what is that to thee or to us?"

Nydia hesitated a moment, and then, putting down the flowers with which she had been charged, she called to the slave who had accompanied her, and left the house without saying another word.

Not till she had got half-way back to the house of Glaucus did she break silence, and even then she only murmured inly: —

"She does not dream, she cannot, of the dangers into which she has plunged. Fool that I am, shall I save her? Yes, for I love Glaucus better than myself."

When she arrived at the house of the Athenian, she learnt that he had gone out with a party of his friends, and none knew whither. He probably would not be home before midnight.

The Thessalian groaned; she sank upon a seat in the hall, and covered her face with her hands as if to collect her thoughts. "There is no time to be lost," thought she, starting up. She turned to the slave who had accompanied her.

[1] Terence.

"Knowest thou," said she, "if Ione has any relative, any intimate friend at Pompeii?"

"Why, by Jupiter!" answered the slave, "art thou silly enough to ask the question? Every one in Pompeii knows that Ione has a brother who, young and rich, has been — under the rose I speak — so foolish as to become a priest of Isis."

"A priest of Isis! O Gods! his name?"

"Apæcides."

"I know it all," muttered Nydia: "brother and sister, then, are to be both victims! Apæcides! Yes, that was the name I heard in ——. Ha! he well, then, knows the peril that surrounds his sister; I will go to him."

She sprang up at that thought, and taking the staff which always guided her steps, she hastened to the neighboring shrine of Isis. Till she had been under the guardianship of the kindly Greek, that staff had sufficed to conduct the poor blind girl from corner to corner of Pompeii. Every street, every turning in the more frequented parts, was familiar to her; and as the inhabitants entertained a tender and half-superstitious veneration for those subject to her infirmity, the passengers had always given way to her timid steps. Poor girl, she little dreamed that she should, ere very many days were passed, find her blindness her protection, and a guide far safer than the keenest eyes!

But since she had been under the roof of Glaucus, he had ordered a slave to accompany her always; and the poor devil thus appointed, who was somewhat of the fattest, and who, after having twice performed the journey to Ione's house, now saw himself condemned to a third excursion (whither, the gods only knew), hastened after her, deploring his fate, and solemnly assuring Castor and Pollux that he believed the blind girl had the talaria of Mercury as well as the infirmity of Cupid.

Nydia, however, required but little of his assistance to find her way to the popular temple of Isis: the space before it was now deserted, and she won without obstacle to the sacred rails.

"There is no one here," said the fat slave. "What dost

thou want, or whom? Knowest thou not that the priests do not live in the temple?"

"Call out," said she, impatiently; "night and day there is always one flamen, at least, watching in the shrines of Isis."

The slave called: no one appeared.

"Seest thou no one?"

"No one."

"Thou mistakest; I hear a sigh: look again."

The slave, wondering and grumbling, cast round his heavy eyes, and before one of the altars, whose remains still crowd the narrow space, he beheld a form bending as in meditation.

"I see a figure," said he, "and by the white garments it is a priest."

"O flamen of Isis!" cried Nydia, "servant of the Most Ancient, hear me!"

"Who calls?" said a low and melancholy voice.

"One who has no common tidings to impart to a member of your body: I come to declare and not to ask oracles."

"With whom wouldst thou confer? This is no hour for thy conference; depart, disturb me not: the night is sacred to the gods, the day to men."

"Methinks I know thy voice: thou art he whom I seek; yet I have heard thee speak but once before. Art thou not the priest Apæcides?"

"I am that man," replied the priest, emerging from the altar and approaching the rail.

"Thou art! the gods be praised!" Waving her hand to the slave, she bade him withdraw to a distance; and he, who naturally imagined some superstition connected, perhaps, with the safety of Ione, could alone lead her to the temple, obeyed, and seated himself on the ground at a little distance. "Hush!" said she, speaking quick and low; "art thou indeed Apæcides?"

"If thou knowest me, canst thou not recall my features?"

"I am blind," answered Nydia; "my eyes are in my ear, and *that* recognizes thee: yet swear that thou art he."

"By the gods I swear it, by my right hand, and by the moon!"

"Hush; speak low; bend near; give me thy hand: knowest thou Arbaces? Hast thou laid flowers at the feet of the dead? Ah! thy hand is cold; hark yet! Hast thou taken the awful vow?"

"Who art thou, whence comest thou, pale maiden?" said Apæcides, fearfully. "I know thee not. Thine is not the breast on which this head hath lain. I have never seen thee before."

"But thou hast heard my voice: no matter, those recollections it should shame us both to recall. Listen; thou hast a sister."

"Speak, speak! What of her?"

"Thou knowest the banquets of the dead, stranger. It pleases thee, perhaps, to share them. Would it please thee to have thy sister a partaker? Would it please thee that Arbaces was her host?"

"O Gods, he dare not! Girl, if thou mockest me, tremble. I will tear thee limb from limb!"

"I speak the truth; and while I speak, Ione is in the halls of Arbaces, — for the first time his guest. Thou knowest if there be peril in that first time! Farewell; I have fulfilled my charge."

"Stay! stay!" cried the priest, passing his wan hand over his brow. "If this be true, what — what can be done to save her? They may not admit me. I know not all the mazes of that intricate mansion. O Nemesis! justly am I punished."

"I will dismiss yon slave: be thou my guide and comrade; I will lead thee to the private door of the house; I will whisper to thee the word which admits. Take some weapon: it may be needful."

"Wait an instant," said Apæcides, retiring into one of the cells that flank the temple, and reappearing in a few moments wrapped in a large cloak, which was then much worn by all classes, and which concealed his sacred dress. "Now," he said, grinding his teeth, "if Arbaces hath dared to — but he dare not! he dare not! Why should I suspect him? Is he so base a villain? I will not think it; yet sophist, dark bewilderer that he is! O Gods, protect! Hush! *are* there gods?

Yes, there is one goddess, at least, whose voice I can command; and that is — Vengeance!"

Muttering these disconnected thoughts, Apæcides, followed by his silent and sightless companion, hastened through the most solitary paths to the house of the Egyptian.

The slave, abruptly dismissed by Nydia, shrugged his shoulders, muttered an adjuration, and, nothing loth, rolled off to his cubiculum.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOLITUDE AND SOLILOQUY OF THE EGYPTIAN. — HIS CHARACTER ANALYZED.

We must go back a few hours in the progress of our story. At the first gray dawn of the day, which Glaucus had already marked with white, the Egyptian was seated, sleepless and alone, on the summit of the lofty and pyramidal tower which flanked his house. A tall parapet around it served as a wall, and conspired, with the height of the edifice and the gloomy trees that girded the mansion, to defy the prying eyes of curiosity or observation. A table, on which lay a scroll filled with mystic figures, was before him. On high, the stars waxed dim and faint, and the shades of night melted from the sterile mountain-tops; only above Vesuvius there rested a deep and massy cloud, which for several days past had gathered darker and more solid over its summit. The struggle of night and day was more visible over the broad ocean, which stretched calm, like a gigantic lake, bounded by the circling shores that, covered with vines and foliage, and gleaming here and there with the white walls of sleeping cities, sloped to the scarce rippling waves.

It was the hour above all others most sacred to the daring science of the Egyptian, — the science which would read our changeful destinies in the stars.

He had filled his scroll, he had noted the moment and the

sign; and, leaning upon his hand, he had surrendered himself to the thoughts which his calculation excited.

"*Again* do the stars forewarn me! Some danger, then, assuredly awaits me!" said he, slowly; "some danger, violent and sudden in its nature. The stars wear for me the same mocking menace which, if our chronicles do not err, they once wore for Pyrrhus, — for him, doomed to strive for all things, to enjoy none, — all attacking, nothing gaining, — battles without fruit, laurels without triumph, fame without success; at last made craven by his own superstitions, and slain like a dog by a tile from the hand of an old woman! Verily, the stars flatter when they give me a type in this fool of war, when they promise to the ardor of my wisdom the same results as to the madness of his ambition, — perpetual exercise, no certain goal; the Sisyphus task, the mountain and the stone, — the stone, a gloomy image, — it reminds me that I am threatened with somewhat of the same death as the Epirote. Let me look again. 'Beware,' say the shining prophets, 'how thou passest under ancient roofs, or besieged walls, or overhanging cliffs; a stone, hurled from above, is charged by the curses of destiny against thee.' And at no distant date from this comes the peril; but I cannot, of a certainty, read the day and hour. Well! if my glass runs low, the sands shall sparkle to the last. Yet, if I escape this peril, — ay, if I escape, — bright and clear as the moonlight track along the waters glows the rest of my existence. I see honors, happiness, success, shining upon every billow of the dark gulf beneath which I must sink at last. What, then! with such destinies *beyond* the peril, shall I succumb *to* the peril? My soul whispers hope, it sweeps exultingly beyond the boding hour, it revels in the future, its own courage is its fittest omen. If I were to perish so suddenly and so soon, the shadow of death would darken over me, and I should feel the icy presentiment of my doom. My soul would express, in sadness and in gloom, its forecast of the dreary Orcus. But it smiles; it assures me of deliverance."

As he thus concluded his soliloquy, the Egyptian involuntarily rose. He paced rapidly the narrow space of that star-roofed floor, and, pausing at the parapet, looked again upon

the gray and melancholy heavens. The chills of the faint dawn came refreshingly upon his brow, and gradually his mind resumed its natural and collected calm. He withdrew his gaze from the stars, as, one after one, they receded into the depths of heaven; and his eyes fell over the broad expanse below. Dim in the silenced port of the city rose the masts of the galleys; along that mart of luxury and of labor was stilled the mighty hum. No lights, save here and there from before the columns of a temple, or in the porticos of the voiceless forum, broke the wan and fluctuating light of the struggling morn. From the heart of the torpid city, so soon to vibrate with a thousand passions, there came no sound; the streams of life circulated not: they lay locked under the ice of sleep. From the huge space of the amphitheatre, with its stony seats rising one above the other, — coiled and round as some slumbering monster, — rose a thin and ghastly mist, which gathered darker, and more dark, over the scattered foliage that gloomed in its vicinity. The city seemed as, after the awful change of seventeen ages, it seems now to the traveller, — a City of the Dead.[1]

The ocean itself, that serene and tideless sea, lay scarce less hushed, save that from its deep bosom came, softened by the distance, a faint and regular murmur, like the breathing of its sleep; and curving far, as with outstretched arms, into the green and beautiful land, it seemed unconsciously to clasp to its breast the cities sloping to its margin, Stabiæ,[2] and Herculaneum, and Pompeii, — those children and darlings of the deep. "Ye slumber," said the Egyptian, as he scowled over the cities, the boast and flower of Campania; "ye slumber! would it were the eternal repose of death! As ye now, jewels in the crown of empire, so once were the cities of the Nile. Their greatness hath perished from them, they sleep amidst ruins, their palaces and their shrines are tombs, the serpent

[1] When Sir Walter Scott visited Pompeii with Sir William Gell, almost his only remark was the exclamation, "The City of the Dead, — the City of the Dead!"

[2] Stabiæ was indeed no longer a city, but it was still a favorite site for the villas of the rich.

coils in the grass of their streets, the lizard basks in their solitary halls. By that mysterious law of nature, which humbles one to exalt the other, ye have thriven upon their ruins; thou, haughty Rome, hast usurped the glories of Sesostris and Semiramis; thou art a robber, clothing thyself with their spoils! And these, slaves in thy triumph, that I (the last son of forgotten monarchs) survey below, reservoirs of thine all-pervading power and luxury, I curse as I behold. The time shall come when Egypt shall be avenged; when the barbarian's steed shall make his manger in the Golden House of Nero; and thou that hast sown the wind with conquest shalt reap the harvest in the whirlwind of desolation!"

As the Egyptian uttered a prediction which fate so fearfully fulfilled, a more solemn and boding image of ill omen never occurred to the dreams of painter or of poet. The morning light which can pale so wanly even the young cheek of beauty, gave his majestic and stately features almost the colors of the grave, with the dark hair falling massively around them, and the dark robes flowing long and loose, and the arm outstretched from that lofty eminence, and the glittering eyes, fierce with a savage gladness, half prophet and half fiend!

He turned his gaze from the city and the ocean; before him lay the vineyards and the meadows of the rich Campania. The gate and walls — ancient, half Pelasgic — of the city, seemed not to bound its extent. Villas and villages stretched on every side up the ascent of Vesuvius, not nearly then so steep or so lofty as at present. For as Rome itself is built on an exhausted volcano, so in similar security the inhabitants of the South tenanted the green and vine-clad places around a volcano whose fires they believed at rest forever. From the gate stretched the long street of tombs, various in size and architecture, by which, on that side, the city is yet approached. Above all rose the cloud-capped summit of the Dread Mountain, with the shadows, now dark, now light, betraying the mossy caverns and ashy rocks, which testified the past conflagrations, and might have prophesied — but man is blind — that which was to come!

Difficult was it then and there to guess the causes why the

tradition of the place wore so gloomy and stern a hue; why, in those smiling plains, for miles around — to Baiæ and Misenum — the poets had imagined the entrance and thresholds of their hell, — their Acheron, and their fabled Styx; why, in those Phlegræ,[1] now laughing with the vine, they placed the battles of the gods, and supposed the daring Titans to have sought the victory of heaven, — save, indeed, that yet, in yon seared and blasted summit, fancy might think to read the characters of the Olympian thunderbolt.

But it was neither the rugged height of the still volcano, nor the fertility of the sloping fields, nor the melancholy avenue of tombs, nor the glittering villas of a polished and luxurious people, that now arrested the eye of the Egyptian. On one part of the landscape the mountain of Vesuvius descended to the plain in a narrow and uncultivated ridge, broken here and there by jagged crags and copses of wild foliage. At the base of this lay a marshy and unwholesome pool; and the intent gaze of Arbaces caught the outline of some living form moving by the marshes, and stooping ever and anon as if to pluck its rank produce.

"Ho!" said he, aloud, "I have, then, another companion in these unworldly night-watches. The witch of Vesuvius is abroad. What! doth she, too, as the credulous imagine, — doth she, too, learn the lore of the great stars? Hath she been uttering foul magic to the moon, or culling (as her pauses betoken) foul herbs from the venomous marsh? Well, I must see this fellow-laborer. Whoever strives to know, learns that no human lore is despicable. Despicable only you, ye fat and bloated things, slaves of luxury, sluggards in thought, who, cultivating nothing but the barren sense, dream that its poor soul can produce alike the myrtle and the laurel. No, the wise only can enjoy; to us only *true* luxury is given, when mind, brain, invention, experience, thought, learning, imagination, all contribute like rivers to swell the seas of SENSE! — Ione!"

As Arbaces uttered that last and charmed word, his thoughts sank at once into a more deep and profound channel. His

[1] Or, *Phlegræi Campi*; viz., scorched or burned fields.

steps paused; he took not his eyes from the ground; once or twice he smiled joyously, and then, as he turned from his place of vigil, and sought his couch, he muttered, "If death frowns so near, I will say at least that I have lived, — Ione shall be mine!"

The character of Arbaces was one of those intricate and varied webs, in which even the mind that sat within it was sometimes confused and perplexed. In him, the son of a fallen dynasty, the outcast of a sunken people, was that spirit of discontented pride which ever rankles in one of a sterner mould, who feels himself inexorably shut from the sphere in which his fathers shone, and to which nature as well as birth no less entitles himself. This sentiment hath no benevolence; it wars with society, it sees enemies in mankind. But with this sentiment did not go its common companion, poverty. Arbaces possessed wealth which equalled that of most of the Roman nobles; and this enabled him to gratify to the utmost the passions which had no outlet in business or ambition. Travelling from clime to clime, and beholding still Rome everywhere, he increased both his hatred of society and his passion for pleasure. He was in a vast prison, which, however, he could fill with the ministers of luxury. He could not escape from the prison, and his only object, therefore, was to give it the character of the palace. The Egyptians, from the earliest time, were devoted to the joys of sense; Arbaces inherited both their appetite for sensuality and the glow of imagination which struck light from its rottenness. But still, unsocial in his pleasures as in his graver pursuits, and brooking neither superior nor equal, he admitted few to his companionship save the willing slaves of his profligacy. He was the solitary lord of a crowded harem; but, with all, he felt condemned to that satiety which is the constant curse of men whose intellect is above their pursuits, and that which once had been the impulse of passion froze down to the ordinance of custom. From the disappointments of sense he sought to raise himself by the cultivation of knowledge; but as it was not his object to serve mankind, so he despised that knowledge which is practical and useful. His dark imagination

loved to exercise itself in those more visionary and obscure researches which are ever the most delightful to a wayward and solitary mind, and to which he himself was invited by the daring pride of his disposition and the mysterious traditions of his clime. Dismissing faith in the confused creeds of the heathen world, he reposed the greatest faith in the power of human wisdom. He did not know (perhaps no one in that age distinctly did) the limits which Nature imposes upon our discoveries. Seeing that the higher we mount in knowledge the more wonders we behold, he imagined that Nature not only worked miracles in her ordinary course, but that she might, by the cabala of some master soul, be diverted from that course itself. Thus he pursued science, across her appointed boundaries, into the land of perplexity and shadow. From the truths of astronomy he wandered into astrological fallacy; from the secrets of chemistry he passed into the spectral labyrinth of magic; and he who could be sceptical as to the power of the gods, was credulously superstitious as to the power of man.

The cultivation of magic, carried at that day to a singular height among the would-be wise, was especially Eastern in its origin; it was alien to the early philosophy of the Greeks, nor had it been received by them with favor until Ostanes, who accompanied the army of Xerxes, introduced, amongst the simple credulities of Hellas, the solemn superstitions of Zoroaster. Under the Roman emperors it had become, however, naturalized at Rome (a meet subject for Juvenal's fiery wit). Intimately connected with magic was the worship of Isis, and the Egyptian religion was the means by which was extended the devotion to Egyptian sorcery. The theurgic, or benevolent magic, the goetic, or dark and evil necromancy, were alike in pre-eminent repute during the first century of the Christian era; and the marvels of Faustus are not comparable to those of Apollonius.[1] Kings, courtiers, and sages, all trembled before the professors of the dread science. And not the least remarkable of his tribe was the formidable and profound Arbaces. His fame and his discoveries were known to all the

[1] See note (*a*) at the end.



cultivators of magic; they even survived himself. But it was not by his real name that he was honored by the sorcerer and the sage: his real name, indeed, was unknown in Italy, for "Arbaces" was not a genuinely Egyptian but a Median appellation, which, in the admixture and unsettlement of the ancient races, had become common in the country of the Nile; and there were various reasons, not only of pride, but of policy (for in youth he had conspired against the majesty of Rome), which induced him to conceal his true name and rank. But neither by the name he had borrowed from the Mede, nor by that which in the colleges of Egypt would have attested his origin from kings, did the cultivators of magic acknowledge the potent master. He received from their homage a more mystic appellation, and was long remembered in Magna Græcia and the Eastern plains by the name of "Hermes, the Lord of the Flaming Belt." His subtle speculations and boasted attributes of wisdom, recorded in various volumes, were among those tokens "of the curious arts" which the Christian converts most joyfully, yet most fearfully, burned at Ephesus, depriving posterity of the proofs of the cunning of the fiend.

The conscience of Arbaces was solely of the intellect; it was awed by no moral laws. If man imposed these checks upon the herd, so he believed that man, by superior wisdom, could raise himself above them. "If [he reasoned] I have the genius to impose laws, have I not the right to command my own creations? Still more, have I not the right to control, to evade, to scorn, the fabrications of yet meaner intellects than my own?" Thus, if he were a villain, he justified his villany by what ought to have made him virtuous; namely, the elevation of his capacities.

Most men have more or less the passion for power; in Arbaces that passion corresponded exactly to his character. It was not the passion for an external and brute authority. He desired not the purple and the fasces, the insignia of vulgar command. His youthful ambition once foiled and defeated, scorn had supplied its place. His pride, his contempt for Rome, — Rome, which had become the synonym of the

world (Rome, whose haughty name he regarded with the same disdain as that which Rome herself lavished upon the barbarian), did not permit him to aspire to sway over others, for that would render him at once the tool or creature of the emperor. He, the Son of the Great Race of Rameses, — *he* execute the orders of, and receive his power from another! — the mere notion filled him with rage. But in rejecting an ambition that coveted nominal distinctions, he but indulged the more in the ambition to rule the heart. Honoring mental power as the greatest of earthly gifts, he loved to feel that power palpably in himself, by extending it over all whom he encountered. Thus had he ever sought the young, — thus had he ever fascinated and controlled them. He loved to find subjects in men's souls, — to rule over an invisible and immaterial empire! Had he been less sensual and less wealthy, he might have sought to become the founder of a new religion. As it was, his energies were checked by his pleasures. Besides, however, the vague love of this moral sway, (vanity so dear to sages!) he was influenced by a singular and dreamlike devotion to all that belonged to the mystic Land his ancestors had swayed. Although he disbelieved in her deities, he believed in the allegories they represented (or rather he interpreted those allegories anew). He loved to keep alive the *worship* of Egypt, because he thus maintained the shadow and the recollection of her *power*. He loaded, therefore, the altars of Osiris and of Isis with regal donations, and was ever anxious to dignify their priesthood by new and wealthy converts. The vow taken, the priesthood embraced, he usually chose the comrades of his pleasures from those whom he had made his victims, — partly because he thus secured to himself their secrecy, partly because he thus yet more confirmed to himself his peculiar power. Hence the motives of his conduct to Apæcides, strengthened as these were, in that instance, by his passion for Ione.

He had seldom lived long in one place; but as he grew older, he grew more wearied of the excitement of new scenes, and he had sojourned among the delightful cities of Campania for a period which surprised even himself. In fact, his pride

somewhat crippled his choice of residence. His unsuccessful conspiracy excluded him from those burning climes which he deemed of right his own hereditary possession, and which now cowered, supine and sunken, under the wings of the Roman eagle. Rome herself was hateful to his indignant soul; nor did he love to find his riches rivalled by the minions of the court, and cast into comparative poverty by the mighty magnificence of the court itself. The Campanian cities proffered to him all that his nature craved, — the luxuries of an unequalled climate, the imaginative refinements of a voluptuous civilization. He was removed from the sight of a superior wealth; he was without rivals to his riches; he was free from the spies of a jealous court. As long as he was rich, none pried into his conduct. He pursued the dark tenor of his way undisturbed and secure.

It is the curse of sensualists never to love till the pleasures of sense begin to pall; their ardent youth is frittered away in countless desires: their hearts are exhausted. So, ever chasing love, and taught by a restless imagination to exaggerate, perhaps, its charms, the Egyptian had spent all the glory of his years without attaining the object of his desires. The beauty of to-morrow succeeded the beauty of to-day, and the shadows bewildered him in his pursuit of the substance. When, two years before the present date, he beheld Ione, he saw for the first time one whom he imagined he could *love*. He stood then upon that bridge of life from which man sees before him distinctly a wasted youth on the one side and the darkness of approaching age upon the other, — a time in which we are more than ever anxious, perhaps, to secure to ourselves, ere it be yet too late, whatever we have been taught to consider necessary to the enjoyment of a life of which the brighter half is gone.

With an earnestness and a patience which he had never before commanded for his pleasures, Arbaces had devoted himself to win the heart of Ione. It did not content him to love, he desired to be loved. In this hope he had watched the expanding youth of the beautiful Neapolitan; and knowing the influence that the mind possesses over those who are

taught to cultivate the mind, he had contributed willingly to form the genius and enlighten the intellect of Ione, in the hope that she would be thus able to appreciate what he felt would be his best claim to her affection; namely, a character which, however criminal and perverted, was rich in its original elements of strength and grandeur. When he felt that character to be acknowledged, he willingly allowed, nay, encouraged her, to mix among the idle votaries of pleasure, in the belief that her soul, fitted for higher commune, would miss the companionship of his own, and that in comparison with others she would learn to love herself. He had forgot that as the sunflower to the sun, so youth turns to youth, until his jealousy of Glaucus suddenly apprised him of his error. From that moment, though, as we have seen, he knew not the extent of his danger, a fiercer and more tumultuous direction was given to a passion long controlled. Nothing kindles the fire of love like a sprinkling of the anxieties of jealousy; it takes then a wilder, a more resistless flame; it forgets its softness; it ceases to be tender; it assumes something of the intensity, of the ferocity, of hate.

Arbaces resolved to lose no further time upon cautious and perilous preparations; he resolved to place an irrevocable barrier between himself and his rivals; he resolved to possess himself of the person of Ione; not that in his present love, so long nursed and fed by hopes purer than those of passion alone, he would have been contented with that mere possession. He desired the heart, the soul, no less than the beauty of Ione; but he imagined that once separated by a daring crime from the rest of mankind, once bound to Ione by a tie that memory could not break, she would be driven to concentrate her thoughts in him, that his arts would complete his conquest, and that, according to the true moral of the Roman and the Sabine, the empire obtained by force would be cemented by gentler means. This resolution was yet more confirmed in him by his belief in the prophecies of the stars; they had long foretold to him this year, and even the present month, as the epoch of some dread disaster menacing life itself. He was driven to a certain and limited date. He

resolved to crowd, monarch-like, on his funeral pyre all that his soul held most dear. In his own words, if he were to die, he resolved to feel that he had lived, and that Ione should be his own.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT BECOMES OF IONE IN THE HOUSE OF ARBACES. — THE FIRST SIGNAL OF THE WRATH OF THE DREAD FOE.

WHEN Ione entered the spacious hall of the Egyptian, the same awe which had crept over her brother impressed itself also upon her; there seemed to her as to him something ominous and warning in the still and mournful faces of those dread Theban monsters, whose majestic and passionless features the marble so well portrayed: —

> "Their look with the reach of past ages was wise,
> And the soul of eternity thought in their eyes."

The tall Ethiopian slave grinned as he admitted her, and motioned to her to proceed. Half-way up the hall she was met by Arbaces himself, in festive robes, which glittered with jewels. Although it was broad day without, the mansion, according to the practice of the luxurious, was artificially darkened, and the lamps cast their still and odor-giving light over the rich floors and ivory roofs.

"Beautiful Ione!" said Arbaces, as he bent to touch her hand, "it is you that have eclipsed the day; it is your eyes that light up the halls; it is your breath which fills them with perfumes."

"You must not talk to me thus," said Ione, smiling; "you forget that your lore has sufficiently instructed my mind to render these graceful flatteries to my person unwelcome. It was you who taught me to disdain adulation: will you unteach your pupil?"

There was something so frank and charming in the manner of Ione, as she thus spoke, that the Egyptian was more than ever

enamoured, and more than ever disposed to renew the offence he had committed; he, however, answered quickly and gayly, and hastened to renew the conversation.

He led her through the various chambers of a house which seemed to contain to her eyes, inexperienced to other splendor than the minute elegance of Campanian cities, the treasures of the world.

In the walls were set pictures of inestimable art; the lights shone over statues of the noblest age of Greece. Cabinets of gems, each cabinet itself a gem, filled up the interstices of the columns; the most precious woods lined the thresholds and composed the doors; gold and jewels seemed lavished all around. Sometimes they were alone in these rooms; sometimes they passed through silent rows of slaves, who, kneeling as she passed, proffered to her offerings of bracelets, of chains, of gems, which the Egyptian vainly entreated her to receive.

"I have often heard," said she, wonderingly, "that you were rich; but I never dreamed of the amount of your wealth."

"Would I could coin it all," replied the Egyptian, "into one crown, which I might place upon that snowy brow!"

"Alas! the weight would crush me; I should be a second Tarpeia," answered Ione, laughingly.

"But thou dost not disdain riches, O Ione! they know not what life is capable of who are not wealthy. Gold is the great magician of earth: it realizes our dreams, it gives them the power of a god; there is a grandeur, a sublimity, in its possession; it is the mightiest, yet the most obedient of our slaves."

The artful Arbaces sought to dazzle the young Neapolitan by his treasures and his eloquence; he sought to awaken in her the desire to be mistress of what she surveyed; he hoped that she would confound the owner with the possessions, and that the charms of his wealth would be reflected on himself. Meanwhile Ione was secretly somewhat uneasy at the gallantries which escaped from those lips, which, till lately, had seemed to disdain the common homage we pay to beauty; and with that delicate subtlety which woman alone possesses, she

sought to ward off shafts deliberately aimed, and to laugh or to talk away the meaning from his warming language. Nothing in the world is more pretty than that same species of defence; it is the charm of the African necromancer who professed with a feather to turn aside the winds.

The Egyptian was intoxicated and subdued by her grace even more than by her beauty. It was with difficulty that he suppressed his emotions; alas! the feather was only powerful against the summer breezes it would be the sport of the storm.

Suddenly, as they stood in one hall, which was surrounded by draperies of silver and white, the Egyptian clapped his hands, and, as if by enchantment, a banquet rose from the floor; a couch, or throne, with a crimson canopy, ascended simultaneously at the feet of Ione, and at the same instant from behind the curtains swelled invisible and softest music.

Arbaces placed himself at the feet of Ione; and children, young and beautiful as Loves, ministered to the feast.

The feast was over, the music sank into a low and subdued strain, and Arbaces thus addressed his beautiful guest: —

"Hast thou never, in this dark and uncertain world — hast thou never aspired, my pupil, to look beyond; hast thou never wished to put aside the veil of futurity, and to behold on the shores of Fate the shadowy images of things to be? For it is not the past alone that has its ghosts: each event *to come* has also its spectrum, its shade; when the hour arrives, life enters it, the shadow becomes corporeal and walks the world. Thus, in the land beyond the grave are ever two impalpable and spiritual hosts, — the things to be, the things that have been! If by our wisdom we can penetrate that land, we see the one as the other, and learn, as *I* have learned, not alone the mysteries of the dead, but also the destiny of the living."

"As thou hast learned! Can wisdom attain so far?"

"Wilt thou prove my knowledge, Ione, and behold the representation of thine own fate? It is a drama more striking than those of Æschylus: it is one I have prepared for thee, if thou wilt see the shadows perform their part."

The Neapolitan trembled; she thought of Glaucus, and

sighed as well as trembled; were their destinies to be united? Half incredulous, half believing, half awed, half alarmed by the words of her strange host, she remained for some moments silent, and then answered, —

"It may revolt, it may terrify; the knowledge of the future will perhaps only embitter the present!"

"Not so, Ione. I have myself looked upon thy future lot, and the ghosts of thy Future bask in the garden of Elysium: amidst the asphodel and the rose they prepare the garlands of thy sweet destiny, and the Fates, so harsh to others, weave only for thee the web of happiness and love. Wilt thou then come and behold thy doom, so that thou mayest enjoy it beforehand?"

Again the heart of Ione murmured "*Glaucus;*" she uttered a half-audible assent; the Egyptian rose, and taking her by the hand, he led her across the banquet-room; the curtains withdrew, as by magic hands, and the music broke forth in a louder and gladder strain; they passed a row of columns, on either side of which fountains cast aloft their fragrant waters; they descended by broad and easy steps into a garden. The eve had commenced; the moon was already high in heaven, and those sweet flowers that sleep by day, and fill with ineffable odors the airs of night, were thickly scattered amidst alleys cut through the starlit foliage; or, gathered in baskets, lay like offerings at the feet of the frequent statues that gleamed along their path.

"Whither wouldst thou lead me, Arbaces?" said Ione, wonderingly.

"But yonder," said he, pointing to a small building which stood at the end of the vista. "It is a temple consecrated to the Fates; our rites require such holy ground."

They passed into a narrow hall, at the end of which hung a sable curtain. Arbaces lifted it; Ione entered, and found herself in total darkness.

"Be not alarmed," said the Egyptian, "the light will rise instantly." While he so spoke, a soft and warm and gradual light diffused itself around; as it spread over each object, Ione perceived that she was in an apartment of moderate

size, hung everywhere with black; a couch with draperies of the same hue was beside her. In the centre of the room was a small altar, on which stood a tripod of bronze. At one side, upon a lofty column of granite, was a colossal head of the blackest marble, which, she perceived, by the crown of wheat-ears that encircled the brow, represented the great Egyptian goddess. Arbaces stood before the altar: he had laid his garland on the shrine, and seemed occupied with pouring into the tripod the contents of a brazen vase. Suddenly from that tripod leaped into life a blue, quick, darting, irregular flame; the Egyptian drew back to the side of Ione, and muttered some words in a language unfamiliar to her ear; the curtain at the back of the altar waved tremulously to and fro: it parted slowly, and in the aperture which was thus made, Ione beheld an indistinct and pale landscape, which gradually grew brighter and clearer as she gazed; at length she discovered plainly trees and rivers and meadows, and all the beautiful diversity of the richest earth. At length, before the landscape a dim shadow glided; it rested opposite to Ione; slowly the same charm seemed to operate upon it as over the rest of the scene; it took form and shape, and lo, in its feature and in its form Ione beheld herself!

Then the scene behind the spectre faded away, and was succeeded by the representation of a gorgeous palace; a throne was raised in the centre of its hall, the dim forms of slaves and guards were ranged around it, and a pale hand held over the throne the likeness of a diadem.

A new actor now appeared; he was clothed from head to foot in a dark robe, his face was concealed, he knelt at the feet of the shadowy Ione, he clasped her hand, he pointed to the throne, as if to invite her to ascend it.

The Neapolitan's heart beat violently. "Shall the shadow disclose itself?" whispered a voice beside her, the voice of Arbaces.

"Ah, yes!" answered Ione, softly.

Arbaces raised his hand; the spectre seemed to drop the mantle that concealed its form, and Ione shrieked: it was Arbaces himself that thus knelt before her.

"This is, indeed, thy fate!" whispered again the Egyptian's voice in her ear; "and thou art destined to be the bride of Arbaces."

Ione started; the black curtain closed over the phantasmagoria, and Arbaces himself — the real, the living Arbaces — was at her feet.

"Oh, Ione!" said he, passionately gazing upon her, "listen to one who has long struggled vainly with his love. I adore thee! The Fates do not lie; thou art destined to be mine. I have sought the world around, and found none like thee. From my youth upward I have sighed for such as thou art. I have dreamed till I saw thee: I wake, and I behold thee. Turn not away from me, Ione; think not of me as thou hast thought; I am not that being, cold, insensate, and morose, which I have seemed to thee. Never woman had lover so devoted, so passionate as I will be to Ione. Do not struggle in my clasp: see, I release thy hand. Take it from me if thou wilt; well, be it so! But do not reject me, Ione; do not rashly reject: judge of thy power over him whom thou canst thus transform. I, who never knelt to mortal being, kneel to thee. I, who have commanded fate, receive from thee my own. Ione, tremble not; thou art my queen, my goddess: be my bride! All the wishes thou canst form shall be fulfilled. The ends of the earth shall minister to thee: pomp, power, luxury shall be thy slaves. Arbaces shall have no ambition save the pride of obeying thee. Ione, turn upon me those eyes; shed upon me thy smile. Dark is my soul when thy face is hid from it: shine over me, my sun, my heaven, my daylight! Ione, Ione, do not reject my love!"

Alone, and in the power of this singular and fearful man, Ione was yet not terrified; the respect of his language, the softness of his voice, reassured her, and in her own purity she felt protection. But she was confused, astonished; it was some moments before she could recover the power of reply.

"Rise, Arbaces!" said she at length; and she resigned to him once more her hand, which she as quickly withdrew again when she felt upon it the burning pressure of his lips. "Rise! and if thou art serious, if thy language be in earnest —"

"*If!*" said he, tenderly.

"Well, then, listen to me; you have been my guardian, my friend, my monitor; for this new character I was not prepared. Think not," she added quickly, as she saw his dark eyes glitter with the fierceness of his passion, — "think not that I scorn, that I am not touched, that I am not honored by this homage; but say, canst thou hear me calmly?"

"Ay, though thy words were lightning, and could blast me!"

"*I love another!*" said Ione, blushingly, but in a firm voice.

"By the gods! by hell!" shouted Arbaces, rising to his fullest height; "dare not tell me that, dare not mock me: it is impossible! Whom hast thou seen, whom known? Oh, Ione! it is thy woman's invention, thy woman's art that speaks; thou wouldst gain time. I have surprised, I have terrified thee. Do with me as thou wilt; say that thou lovest not me, but say not that thou lovest another!"

"Alas!" began Ione; and then, appalled before his sudden and unlooked-for violence, she burst into tears.

Arbaces came nearer to her; his breath glowed fiercely on her cheek; he wound his arms round her: she sprang from his embrace. In the struggle a tablet fell from her bosom on the ground; Arbaces perceived, and seized it; it was the letter that morning received from Glaucus. Ione sank upon the couch, half dead with terror.

Rapidly the eyes of Arbaces ran over the writing; the Neapolitan did not dare to gaze upon him. She did not see the deadly paleness that came over his countenance; she marked not his withering frown, nor the quivering of his lip, nor the convulsions that heaved his breast. He read it to the end; and then, as the letter fell from his hand, he said in a voice of deceitful calmness, —

"Is the writer of this the man thou lovest?"

Ione sobbed, but answered not.

"Speak!" he rather shrieked than said.

"It is — it is!"

"And his name — it is written here — his name is Glaucus!"

Ione, clasping her hands, looked round as for succor or escape.

"Then hear me," said Arbaces, sinking his voice into a whisper; "thou shalt go to thy tomb rather than to his arms! What! thinkest thou Arbaces will brook a rival such as this puny Greek? What! thinkest thou that he has watched the fruit ripen to yield it to another? Pretty fool — no! Thou art mine — all — only mine: and thus, thus I seize and claim thee!" As he spoke, he caught Ione in his arms; and in that ferocious grasp was all the energy — less of love than of revenge.

But to Ione despair gave supernatural strength; she again tore herself from him; she rushed to that part of the room by which she had entered; she half withdrew the curtain; he seized her; again she broke away from him and fell, exhausted, and with a loud shriek, at the base of the column which supported the head of the Egyptian goddess. Arbaces paused for a moment, as if to regain his breath, and then once more darted upon his prey.

At that instant the curtain was rudely torn aside; the Egyptian felt a fierce and strong grasp upon his shoulder. He turned; he beheld before him the flashing eyes of Glaucus, and the pale, worn, but menacing countenance of Apæcides. "Ah," he muttered, as he glared from one to the other, "what Fury hath sent ye hither?"

"Atè," answered Glaucus; and he closed at once with the Egyptian. Meanwhile Apæcides raised his sister, now lifeless, from the ground; his strength, exhausted by a mind long overwrought, did not suffice to bear her away, light and delicate though her shape: he placed her, therefore, on the couch, and stood over her with a brandishing knife, watching the contest between Glaucus and the Egyptian, and ready to plunge his weapon in the bosom of Arbaces should he be victorious in the struggle. There is, perhaps, nothing on earth so terrible as the naked and unarmed contest of animal strength, no weapon but those which Nature supplies to rage. Both the antagonists were now locked in each other's grasp, the hand of each seeking the throat of the other, the face drawn back, the fierce eyes

flashing, the muscles strained, the veins swelled, the lips apart, the teeth set; both were strong beyond the ordinary power of men, both animated by relentless wrath; they coiled, they wound around each other; they rocked to and fro, they swayed from end to end of their confined arena, they uttered cries of ire and revenge; they were now before the altar, now at the base of the column where the struggle had commenced: they drew back for breath, — Arbaces leaning against the column, Glaucus a few paces apart.

"O ancient goddess!" exclaimed Arbaces, clasping the column, and raising his eyes toward the sacred image it supported, "protect thy chosen; proclaim thy vengeance against this thing of an upstart creed, who with sacrilegious violence profanes thy resting-place and assails thy servant."

As he spoke, the still and vast features of the goddess seemed suddenly to glow with life; through the black marble, as through a transparent veil, flushed luminously a crimson and burning hue; around the head played and darted coruscations of vivid lightning; the eyes became like balls of lurid fire, and seemed fixed in withering and intolerable wrath upon the countenance of the Greek. Awed and appalled by this sudden and mystic answer to the prayer of his foe, and not free from the hereditary superstitions of his race, the cheeks of Glaucus paled before that strange and ghastly animation of the marble. His knees knocked together; he stood seized with a divine panic, dismayed, aghast, half unmanned before his foe. Arbaces gave him not breathing-time to recover his stupor. "Die, wretch!" he shouted, in a voice of thunder, as he sprang upon the Greek; "the Mighty Mother claims thee as a living sacrifice!" Taken thus by surprise in the first consternation of his superstitious fears, the Greek lost his footing. The marble floor was as smooth as glass; he slid, he fell. Arbaces planted his foot on the breast of his fallen foe. Apæcides, taught by his sacred profession as well as by his knowledge of Arbaces, to distrust all miraculous interpositions, had not shared the dismay of his companion. He rushed forward; his knife gleamed in the air; the watchful Egyptian caught his arm as it descended: one wrench of his powerful

hand tore the weapon from the weak grasp of the priest, one sweeping blow stretched him to the earth; with a loud and exultant yell Arbaces brandished the knife on high. Glaucus gazed upon his impending fate with unwinking eyes, and in the stern and scornful resignation of a fallen gladiator: when, at that awful instant, the floor shook under them with a rapid and convulsive throe, a mightier spirit than that of the Egyptian was abroad, — a giant and crushing power, before which sunk into sudden impotence his passion and his arts. It woke, it stirred, — that Dread Demon of the Earthquake, laughing to scorn alike the magic of human guile and the malice of human wrath. As a Titan, on whom the mountains are piled, it roused itself from the sleep of years; it moved on its tortured couch: the caverns below groaned and trembled beneath the motion of its limbs. In the moment of his vengeance and his power the self-prized demigod was humbled to his real clay. Far and wide along the soil went a hoarse and rumbling sound: the curtains of the chamber shook as at the blast of a storm, the altar rocked, the tripod reeled, and, high over the place of contest, the column trembled and waved from side to side, the sable head of the goddess tottered and fell from its pedestal; and as the Egyptian stooped above his intended victim, right upon his bended form, right between the shoulder and the neck, struck the marble mass! The shock stretched him like the blow of death at once, suddenly, without sound or motion, or semblance of life, upon the floor, apparently crushed by the very divinity he had impiously animated and invoked!

"The Earth has preserved her children," said Glaucus, staggering to his feet. "Blessed be the dread convulsion! Let us worship the providence of the gods!" He assisted Apæcides to rise, and then turned upward the face of Arbaces: it seemed locked as in death; blood gushed from the Egyptian's lips over his glittering robes; he fell heavily from the arms of Glaucus, and the red stream trickled slowly along the marble. Again the earth shook beneath their feet; they were forced to cling to each other; the convulsion ceased as suddenly as it came; they tarried no longer; Glaucus bore Ione lightly in his arms, and they fled from the unhallowed spot. But scarce had they

entered the garden than they were met on all sides by flying and disordered groups of women and slaves, whose festive and glittering garments contrasted in mockery the solemn terror of the hour. They did not appear to heed the strangers; they were occupied only with their own fears. After the tranquillity of sixteen years, that burning and treacherous soil again menaced destruction; they uttered but one cry, "THE EARTHQUAKE! THE EARTHQUAKE!" and passing unmolested from the midst of them, Apæcides and his companions, without entering the house, hastened down one of the alleys, passed a small open gate, and there, sitting on a little mound over which spread the gloom of the dark-green aloes, the moonlight fell on the bended figure of the blind girl; she was weeping bitterly.

BOOK III.

'Αλλὰ, Σελάνα,
Φαῖνε καλόν· τὶν γὰρ ποταείσομαι ἄσυχα, δαίμον,
Τᾷ χθονίᾳ, θ' Ἑκάτᾳ, τὰν καὶ σκύλακες τρομέοντι,
Ἐρχομέναν νεκύων ἀνὰ τ' ἤρια, καὶ μέλαν αἷμα.
Χαῖρ', Ἑκάτα δασπλῆτι, καὶ ἐς τέλος ἄμμιν ὀπάδει,
Φάρμακα ταῦθ' ἕρδοισα χερείονα μήτε τι Κίρκας,
Μήτε τι Μηδείας, μήτε ξανθᾶς Περιμήδας.

THEOCRITUS.

Now sacred moon, the mysteries of my song
To thee and hell-born Hecatè belong, —
Pale Hecatè, who stalks o'er many a tomb,
And adds fresh horror to sepulchral gloom;
Whilst reeking gore distains the paths of death,
And bloodhounds fly the blasting of her breath.
Hail, Hecatè! and give my rising spell
Ev'n Perimeda's sorceries to excel:
Bid the strong witchery match ev'n Circe's skill,
And with Medea's venom'd fury fill.

POLWHELE'S *Translation.*

CHAPTER I.

THE FORUM OF THE POMPEIANS.— THE FIRST RUDE MACHINERY BY WHICH THE NEW ERA OF THE WORLD WAS WROUGHT.

It was early noon, and the forum was crowded alike with the busy and the idle. As at Paris at this day, so at that time in the cities of Italy, men lived almost wholly out of doors: the public buildings, the forum, the porticos, the baths, the temples themselves might be considered their real homes; it was no wonder that they decorated so gorgeously these favorite places of resort; they felt for them a sort of domestic affection as well as a public pride. And animated was, indeed, the aspect of the forum of Pompeii at that time! Along its broad pavement, composed of large flags of marble, were assembled



various groups, conversing in that energetic fashion which appropriates a gesture to every word, and which is still the characteristic of the people of the south. Here, in seven stalls on one side the colonnade, sat the money-changers, with their glittering heaps before them, and merchants and seamen in various costumes crowding round their stalls. On one side, several men in long togas [1] were seen bustling up to a stately edifice, where the magistrates administered justice; these were the lawyers, active, chattering, joking, and punning, as you may find them at this day in Westminster. In the centre of the space pedestals supported various statues, of which the most remarkable was the stately form of Cicero. Around the court ran a regular and symmetrical colonnade of Doric architecture; and there several, whose business drew them early to the place, were taking the slight morning repast which made an Italian breakfast, talking vehemently on the earthquake of the preceding night as they dipped pieces of bread in their cups of diluted wine. In the open space, too, you might perceive various petty traders exercising the arts of their calling. Here one man was holding out ribbons to a fair dame from the country; another man was vaunting to a stout farmer the excellence of his shoes; a third, a kind of stall-restaurateur, still so common in the Italian cities, was supplying many a hungry mouth with hot messes from his small and itinerant stove, while — contrast strongly typical of the mingled bustle and intellect of the time — close by, a schoolmaster was expounding to his puzzled pupils the elements of the Latin grammar.[2] A gallery above the portico, which was ascended by small wooden staircases, had also its throng; though, as here the immediate business of the place was mainly carried on, its groups wore a more quiet and serious air.

[1] For the lawyers and the clients, when attending on their patrons, retained the toga after it had fallen into disuse among the rest of the citizens.

[2] In the Museum at Naples is a picture little known, but representing one side of the forum at Pompeii as then existing, to which I am much indebted in the present description. It may afford a learned consolation to my younger readers to know that the ceremony of *hoisting* (more honored in the breach than the observance) is of high antiquity, and seems to have been performed with all legitimate and public vigor in the forum of Pompeii.

Every now and then the crowd below respectfully gave way as some senator swept along to the Temple of Jupiter (which filled up one side of the forum, and was the senator's hall of meeting), nodding with ostentatious condescension to such of his friends or clients as he distinguished amongst the throng. Mingling amidst the gay dresses of the better orders you saw the hardy forms of the neighboring farmers, as they made their way to the public granaries. Hard by the temple you caught a view of the triumphal arch, and the long street beyond swarming with inhabitants; in one of the niches of the arch a fountain played, cheerily sparkling in the sunbeams; and above its cornice rose the bronzed and equestrian statue of Caligula, strongly contrasting the gay summer skies. Behind the stalls of the money-changers was that building now called the Pantheon; and a crowd of the poorer Pompeians passed through the small vestibule which admitted to the interior, with panniers under their arms, pressing on towards a platform, placed between two columns, where such provisions as the priests had rescued from sacrifice were exposed for sale.

At one of the public edifices appropriated to the business of the city, workmen were employed upon the columns, and you heard the noise of their labor every now and then rising above the hum of the multitude: *the columns are unfinished to this day!*

All, then, united, nothing could exceed in variety the costumes, the ranks, the manners, the occupations of the crowd; nothing could exceed the bustle, the gayety, the animation, the flow and flush of life all around. You saw there all the myriad signs of a heated and feverish civilization, where pleasure and commerce, idleness and labor, avarice and ambition, mingled in one gulf their motley, rushing, yet harmonious streams.

Facing the steps of the Temple of Jupiter, with folded arms, and a knit and contemptuous brow, stood a man of about fifty years of age. His dress was remarkably plain, — not so much from its material, as from the absence of all those ornaments which were worn by the Pompeians of every rank, partly from





the love of show, partly, also, because they were chiefly wrought into those shapes deemed most efficacious in resisting the assaults of magic and the influence of the evil eye.[1] His forehead was high and bald; the few locks that remained at the back of the head were concealed by a sort of cowl, which made a part of his cloak, to be raised or lowered at pleasure, and was now drawn half-way over the head, as a protection from the rays of the sun. The color of his garments was brown, no popular hue with the Pompeians; all the usual admixtures of scarlet or purple seemed carefully excluded. His belt, or girdle, contained a small receptacle for ink, which hooked on to the girdle, a stilus (or implement of writing), and tablets of no ordinary size. What was rather remarkable, the cincture held no purse, which was the almost indispensable appurtenance of the girdle, even when that purse had the misfortune to be empty!

It was not often that the gay and egotistical Pompeians busied themselves with observing the countenances and actions of their neighbors; but there was that in the lip and eye of this bystander so remarkably bitter and disdainful, as he surveyed the religious procession sweeping up the stairs of the temple, that it could not fail to arrest the notice of many.

"Who is yon cynic?" asked a merchant of his companion, a jeweller.

"It is Olinthus," replied the jeweller; "a reputed Nazarene."

The merchant shuddered. "A dread sect!" said he, in a whispered and fearful voice. "It is said that when they meet at nights they always commence their ceremonies by the murder of a new-born babe: they profess a community of goods, too, the wretches! A community of goods! What would become of merchants, or jewellers either, if such notions were in fashion?"

"That is very true," said the jeweller; "besides, they wear no jewels; they mutter imprecations when they see a serpent; and at Pompeii all our ornaments are serpentine."

"Do but observe," said a third, who was a fabricant of bronze, "how yon Nazarene scowls at the piety of the sacri-

[1] See note (*a*) at the end.

ficial procession. He is murmuring curses on the temple, be sure. Do you know, Celcinus, that this fellow, passing by my shop the other day, and seeing me employed on a statue of Minerva, told me with a frown that, had it been marble, he would have broken it; but the bronze was too strong for him. 'Break a goddess!' said I. 'A goddess!' answered the atheist; 'it is a demon, an evil spirit!' Then he passed on his way cursing. Are such things to be borne? What marvel that the earth heaved so fearfully last night, anxious to reject the atheist from her bosom? An atheist do I say? worse still, a scorner of the Fine Arts! Woe to us fabricants of bronze, if such fellows as this give the law to society!"

"These are the incendiaries that burnt Rome under Nero," groaned the jeweller.

While such were the friendly remarks provoked by the air and faith of the Nazarene, Olinthus himself became sensible of the effect he was producing; he turned his eyes round, and observed the intent faces of the accumulating throng, whispering as they gazed; and surveying them for a moment with an expression, first of defiance and afterwards of compassion, he gathered his cloak round him and passed on, muttering audibly, "Deluded idolaters! did not last night's convulsion warn ye? Alas! how will ye meet the last day?"

The crowd that heard these boding words gave them different interpretations, according to their different shades of ignorance and of fear; all, however, concurred in imagining them to convey some awful imprecation. They regarded the Christian as the enemy of mankind; the epithets they lavished upon him, of which "Atheist" was the most favored and frequent, may serve, perhaps, to warn us, believers of that same creed now triumphant, how we indulge the persecution of opinion Olinthus then underwent, and how we apply to those whose notions differ from our own the terms at that day lavished on the fathers of our faith.

As Olinthus stalked through the crowd, and gained one of the more private places of egress from the forum, he perceived gazing upon him a pale and earnest countenance, which he was not slow to recognize.

Wrapped in a pallium that partially concealed his sacred robes, the young Apæcides surveyed the disciple of that new and mysterious creed, to which at one time he had been half a convert.

"Is *he*, too, an impostor? Does this man, so plain and simple in life, in garb, in mien, — does he too, like Arbaces, make austerity the robe of the sensualist? Does the veil of Vesta hide the vices of the prostitute?"

Olinthus, accustomed to men of all classes, and combining with the enthusiasm of his faith a profound experience of his kind, guessed, perhaps, by the index of the countenance, something of what passed within the breast of the priest. He met the survey of Apæcides with a steady eye, and a brow of serene and open candor.

"Peace be with thee!" said he, saluting Apæcides.

"Peace!" echoed the priest, in so hollow a tone that it went at once to the heart of the Nazarene.

"In that wish," continued Olinthus, "all good things are combined: without virtue thou canst not have peace. Like the rainbow, Peace rests upon the earth, but its arch is lost in heaven. Heaven bathes it in hues of light; it springs up amidst tears and clouds; it is a reflection of the Eternal Sun; it is an assurance of calm; it is the sign of a great convenant between Man and God. Such peace, O young man, is the smile of the soul; it is an emanation from the distant orb of immortal light. PEACE be with you!"

"Alas!" began Apæcides, when he caught the gaze of the curious loiterers, inquisitive to know what could possibly be the theme of conversation between a reputed Nazarene and a priest of Isis. He stopped short, and then added in a low tone: "We cannot converse here; I will follow thee to the banks of the river: there is a walk which at this time is usually deserted and solitary."

Olinthus bowed assent. He passed through the streets with a hasty step, but a quick and observant eye. Every now and then he exchanged a significant glance, a slight sign, with some passenger, whose garb usually betokened the wearer to belong to the humbler classes; for Christianity was in this the type of all

other and less mighty revolutions; the grain of mustard-seed was in the hearts of the lowly. Amidst the huts of poverty and labor, the vast stream which afterwards poured its broad waters beside the cities and palaces of earth took its neglected source.

CHAPTER II.

THE NOONDAY EXCURSION ON THE CAMPANIAN SEAS.

"But tell me, Glaucus," said Ione, as they glided down the rippling Sarnus in their boat of pleasure, "how camest thou with Apæcides to my rescue from that bad man?"

"Ask Nydia yonder," answered the Athenian, pointing to the blind girl, who sat at a little distance from them, leaning pensively over her lyre; "she must have thy thanks, not we. It seems that she came to my house, and, finding me from home, sought thy brother in his temple; he accompanied her to Arbaces; on their way they encountered me, with a company of friends, whom thy kind letter had given me a spirit cheerful enough to join. Nydia's quick ear detected my voice; a few words sufficed to make me the companion of Apæcides. I told not my associates why I left them. Could I trust thy name to their light tongues and gossiping opinion? Nydia led us to the garden gate, by which we afterwards bore thee; we entered, and were about to plunge into the mysteries of that evil house, when we heard thy cry in another direction. Thou knowest the rest."

Ione blushed deeply. She then raised her eyes to those of Glaucus, and he felt all the thanks she could not utter. "Come hither, my Nydia," said she tenderly to the Thessalian. "Did I not tell thee that thou shouldst be my sister and friend? Hast thou not already been more, — my guardian, my preserver?"

"It is nothing," answered Nydia, coldly, and without stirring.

"Ah, I forgot," continued Ione: "I should come to thee;"

and she moved along the benches till she reached the place where Nydia sat, and flinging her arms caressingly round her, covered her cheeks with kisses.

Nydia was that morning paler than her wont, and her countenance grew even more wan and colorless as she submitted to the embrace of the beautiful Neapolitan. "But how camest thou, Nydia," whispered Ione, "to surmise so faithfully the danger I was exposed to? Didst thou know aught of the Egyptian?"

"Yes, I knew of his vices."

"And how?"

"Noble Ione, I have been a slave to the vicious; those whom I served were his minions."

"And thou hast entered his house, since thou knewest so well that private entrance?"

"I have played on my lyre to Arbaces," answered the Thessalian, with embarrassment.

"And thou hast escaped the contagion from which thou hast saved Ione?" returned the Neapolitan, in a voice too low for the ear of Glaucus.

"Noble Ione, I have neither beauty nor station; I am a child, and a slave, and blind. The despicable are ever safe."

It was with a pained and proud and indignant tone that Nydia made this humble reply; and Ione felt that she only wounded Nydia by pursuing the subject. She remained silent, and the bark now floated into the sea.

"Confess that I was right, Ione," said Glaucus, "in prevailing on thee not to waste this beautiful noon in thy chamber; confess that I was right."

"Thou wert right, Glaucus," said Nydia, abruptly.

"The dear child speaks for thee," returned the Athenian. "But permit me to move opposite to thee, or our light boat will be overbalanced."

So saying, he took his seat exactly opposite to Ione, and leaning forward, he fancied that it was her breath, and not the winds of summer, that flung fragrance over the sea.

"Thou wert to tell me," said Glaucus, "why for so many days thy door was closed to me?"

"Oh, think of it no more," answered Ione, quickly; "I gave my ear to what I now know was the malice of slander."

"And my slanderer was the Egyptian?"

Ione's silence assented to the question.

"His motives are sufficiently obvious."

"Talk not of him," said Ione, covering her face with her hands, as if to shut out his very thought.

"Perhaps he may be already by the banks of the slow Styx," resumed Glaucus; "yet in that case we should probably have heard of his death. Thy brother, methinks, hath felt the dark influence of his gloomy soul. When we arrived last night at thy house he left me abruptly. Will he ever vouchsafe to be my friend?"

"He is consumed with some secret care," answered Ione, tearfully. "Would that we could lure him from himself! Let us join in that tender office."

"He shall be my brother," returned the Greek.

"How calmly," said Ione, rousing herself from the gloom into which her thoughts of Apæcides had plunged her, "how calmly the clouds seem to repose in heaven; and yet you tell me, for I knew it not myself, that the earth shook beneath us last night."

"It did, and more violently, they say, than it has done since the great convulsion sixteen years ago. The land we live in yet nurses mysterious terror; and the reign of Pluto, which spreads beneath our burning fields, seems rent with unseen commotion. Didst thou not feel the earth quake, Nydia, where thou wert seated last night; and was it not the fear that it occasioned thee that made thee weep?"

"I felt the soil creep and heave beneath me, like some monstrous serpent," answered Nydia; "but as I saw nothing, I did not fear; I imagined the convulsion to be a spell of the Egyptian's. They say he has power over the elements."

"Thou art a Thessalian, my Nydia," replied Glaucus, "and hast a national right to believe in magic."

"Magic! — who doubts it?" answered Nydia, simply: "dost thou?"

"Until last night (when a necromantic prodigy did indeed appall me) methinks I was not credulous in any other magic

save that of love!" said Glaucus, in a tremulous voice, and fixing his eyes on Ione.

"Ah!" said Nydia, with a sort of shiver, and she awoke mechanically a few pleasing notes from her lyre; the sound suited well the tranquillity of the waters and the sunny stillness of the noon.

"Play to us, dear Nydia," said Glaucus, — "play, and give us one of thine old Thessalian songs: whether it be of magic or not, as thou wilt; let it, at least, be of love!"

"Of love!" repeated Nydia, raising her large, wandering eyes, that ever thrilled those who saw them with a mingled fear and pity; you could never familiarize yourself to their aspect: so strange did it seem that those dark wild orbs were ignorant of the day, and either so fixed was their deep mysterious gaze, or so restless and perturbed their glance, that you felt, when you encountered them, that same vague and chilling and half-preternatural impression which comes over you in the presence of the insane, — of those who, having a life outwardly like your own, have a life within life, dissimilar, unsearchable, unguessed!

"Will you that I should sing of love?" said she, fixing those eyes upon Glaucus.

"Yes," replied he, looking down.

She moved a little way from the arm of Ione, still cast round her, as if that soft embrace embarrassed; and placing her light and graceful instrument on her knee, after a short prelude she sang the following strain: —

NYDIA'S LOVE-SONG.

I.

The Wind and the Beam loved the Rose,
 And the Rose loved one;
For who recks the wind where it blows,
 Or loves not the sun?

II.

None knew whence the humble Wind stole,
 Poor sport of the skies;
None dreamt that the Wind had a soul,
 In its mournful sighs!

III.

Oh, happy Beam! how canst thou prove
That bright love of thine?
In thy light is the proof of thy love,
Thou hast but — to shine!

IV.

How its love can the Wind reveal?
Unwelcome its sigh;
Mute — mute to its Rose let it steal, —
Its proof is — to die!

"Thou singest but sadly, sweet girl," said Glaucus; "thy youth only feels as yet the dark shadow of Love; far other inspiration doth he wake when he himself bursts and brightens upon us."

"I sing as I was taught," replied Nydia, sighing.

"Thy master was love-crossed then; try thy hand at a gayer air. Nay, girl, give the instrument to me." As Nydia obeyed, her hand touched his, and with that slight touch her breast heaved, her cheek flushed. Ione and Glaucus, occupied with each other, perceived not those signs of strange and premature emotions which preyed upon a heart that, nourished by imagination, dispensed with hope.

And now, broad, blue, bright before them spread that halcyon sea, fair as at this moment, seventeen centuries from that date, I behold it rippling on the same divinest shores. Clime that yet enervates with a soft and Circean spell, that moulds us insensibly, mysteriously, into harmony with thyself, banishing the thought of austerer labor, the voices of wild ambition, the contests and the roar of life; filling us with gentle and subduing dreams, making necessary to our nature that which is its least earthly portion, so that the very air inspires us with the yearning and thirst of love. Whoever visits thee seems to leave earth and its harsh cares behind; to enter by the Ivory Gate into the Land of Dreams. The young and laughing hours of the *Present*, — the Hours, those children of Saturn, which he hungers ever to devour, seem snatched from his grasp. The past, the future, are forgotten; we enjoy but the breathing-time. Flower of the world's

garden, Fountain of Delight, Italy of Italy, beautiful, benign Campania! vain were, indeed, the Titans, if on this spot they yet struggled for another heaven! Here, if God meant this working-day life for a perpetual holiday, who would not sigh to dwell forever, asking nothing, hoping nothing, fearing nothing, while thy skies shone over him, while thy seas sparkled at his feet, while thine air brought him sweet messages from the violet and the orange, and while the heart, resigned to, beating with, but one emotion, could find the lips and the eyes, which flatter it (vanity of vanities!) that love can defy custom and be eternal?

It was then in this clime, on those seas, that the Athenian gazed upon a face that might have suited the nymph, the spirit of the place: feeding his eyes on the changeful roses of that softest cheek, happy beyond the happiness of common life, loving, and knowing himself beloved.

In the tale of human passion, in past ages, there is something of interest even in the remoteness of the time. We love to feel within us the bond which unites the most distant eras: men, nations, customs perish; *the affections are immortal;* they are the sympathies which unite the ceaseless generations. The past lives again, when we look upon its emotions, — it lives in our own! That which was, ever is! The magician's gift that revives the dead, that animates the dust of forgotten graves, is not in the author's skill, — it is in the heart of the reader!

Still vainly seeking the eyes of Ione, as, half downcast, half averted, they shunned his own, the Athenian, in a low and soft voice, thus expressed the feelings inspired by happier thoughts than those which had colored the song of Nydia.

THE SONG OF GLAUCUS.

I.

As the bark floateth on o'er the summer-lit sea,
Floats my heart o'er the deeps of its passion for thee;
All lost in the space, without terror it glides,
For bright with thy soul is the face of the tides.

Now heaving, now hush'd, is that passionate ocean,
As it catches thy smile or thy sighs;
And the twin-stars [1] that shine on the wanderer's devotion,
Its guide and its god — are thine eyes!

II.

The bark may go down, should the cloud sweep above,
For its being is bound to the light of thy love.
As thy faith and thy smile are its life and its joy,
So thy frown or thy change are the storms that destroy.
Ah! sweeter to sink while the sky is serene,
If time hath a change for thy heart!
If to live be to weep over what thou hast been,
Let me die while I know what thou art!

As the last words of the song trembled over the sea, Ione raised her looks; they met those of her lover. Happy Nydia, — happy in thy affliction, that thou couldst not see that fascinated and charmed gaze, that said so much, that made the eye the voice of the soul, that promised the impossibility of change!

But though the Thessalian could not detect that gaze, she divined its meaning by their silence, by their sighs. She pressed her hands tightly across her breast, as if to keep down its bitter and jealous thoughts; and then she hastened to speak, for that silence was intolerable to her.

"After all, O Glaucus," said she, "there is nothing very mirthful in your strain!"

"Yet I meant it to be so, when I took up thy lyre, pretty one. Perhaps happiness will not permit us to be mirthful."

"How strange is it," said Ione, changing a conversation which oppressed her while it charmed, "that for the last several days yonder cloud has hung motionless over Vesuvius! Yet not indeed motionless, for sometimes it changes its form; and now methinks it looks like some vast giant, with an arm outstretched over the city. Dost thou see the likeness, or is it only to my fancy?"

"Fair Ione, I see it also. It is astonishingly distinct. The giant seems seated on the brow of the mountain: the different

[1] In allusion to the Dioscuri, or twin-stars, the guardian deity of the seamen.

shades of the cloud appear to form a white robe that sweeps over its vast breast and limbs; it seems to gaze with a steady face upon the city below, to point with one hand, as thou sayest, over its glittering streets, and to raise the other — dost thou note it? — towards the higher heaven. It is like the ghost of some huge Titan brooding over the beautiful world he lost; sorrowful for the past, yet with something of menace for the future."

"Could that mountain have any connection with the last night's earthquake? They say that, ages ago, almost in the earliest era of tradition, it gave forth fires as Ætna still. Perhaps the flames yet lurk and dart beneath."

"It is possible," said Glaucus, musingly.

"Thou sayest thou art slow to believe in magic," said Nydia, suddenly. "I have heard that a potent witch dwells amongst the scorched caverns of the mountain, and yon cloud may be the dim shadow of the demon she confers with."

"Thou art full of the romance of thy native Thessaly," said Glaucus; "and a strange mixture of sense and all conflicting superstitions."

"We are ever superstitious in the dark," replied Nydia. "Tell me," she added, after a slight pause, "tell me, O Glaucus, do all that are beautiful resemble each other? They say you are beautiful, and Ione also. Are your faces then the same? I fancy not; yet it ought to be so."

"Fancy no such grievous wrong to Ione," answered Glaucus, laughing. "But we do not, alas! resemble each other, as the homely and the beautiful sometimes do. Ione's hair is dark, mine light; Ione's eyes are — what color, Ione? I cannot see; turn them to me. Oh, are they black? No, they are too soft. Are they blue? No, they are too deep; they change with every ray of the sun, — I know not their color; but mine, sweet Nydia, are gray, and bright only when Ione shines on them! Ione's cheek is — "

"I do not understand one word of thy description," interrupted Nydia, peevishly. "I comprehend only that you do not resemble each other, and I am glad of it."

"Why, Nydia?" said Ione.

Nydia colored slightly. "Because," she replied coldly, "I have always imagined you under different forms, and one likes to know one is right."

"And what hast thou imagined Glaucus to resemble?" asked Ione, softly.

"Music!" replied Nydia, looking down.

"Thou art right," thought Ione.

"And what likeness hast thou ascribed to Ione?"

"I cannot tell yet," answered the blind girl; "I have not yet known her long enough to find a shape and sign for my guesses."

"I will tell thee, then," said Glaucus, passionately; "she is like the sun that warms, — like the wave that refreshes."

"The sun sometimes scorches, and the wave sometimes drowns," answered Nydia.

"Take then these roses," said Glaucus; "let their fragrance suggest to thee Ione."

"Alas, the roses will fade!" said the Neapolitan, archly.

Thus conversing, they wore away the hours; the lovers, conscious only of the brightness and smiles of love, the blind girl feeling only its darkness, its tortures, — the fierceness of jealousy and its woe!

And now, as they drifted on, Glaucus once more resumed the lyre, and woke its strings, with a careless hand, to a strain so wildly and gladly beautiful that even Nydia was aroused from her reverie, and uttered a cry of admiration.

"Thou seest, my child," cried Glaucus, "that I can yet redeem the character of love's music, and that I was wrong in saying happiness could not be gay. Listen, Nydia! listen, dear Ione! and hear

THE BIRTH OF LOVE.[1]

I.

Like a Star in the seas above,
Like a Dream to the waves of sleep —
Up, up, THE INCARNATE LOVE,
She rose from the charmèd deep!

[1] Suggested by a picture of Venus rising from the sea, taken from Pompeii, and now in the Museum at Naples.



And over the Cyprian Isle
The skies shed their silent smile;
And the Forest's green heart was rife
With the stir of the gushing life,—
The life that had leap'd to birth,
In the veins of the happy earth!
Hail! oh, hail!
The dimmest sea-cave below thee,
The farthest sky-arch above,
In their innermost stillness know thee:
And heave with the Birth of Love!
Gale! soft Gale!
Thou comest on thy silver winglets,
From thy home in the tender west;[1]
Now fanning her golden ringlets,
Now hush'd on her heaving breast.
And afar on the murmuring sand,
The Seasons wait hand in hand
To welcome thee, Birth Divine,
To the earth which is henceforth thine.

II.

Behold! how she kneels in the shell,
Bright pearl in its floating cell!
Behold! how the shell's rose-hues
The cheek and the breast of snow.
And the delicate limbs suffuse
Like a blush, with a bashful glow.
Sailing on, slowly sailing
O'er the wild water;
All hail! as the fond light is hailing
Her daughter,
All hail!
We are thine, all thine evermore:
Not a leaf on the laughing shore,
Not a wave on the heaving sea,
Nor a single sigh
In the boundless sky,
But is vow'd evermore to thee!

[1] According to the ancient mythologists, Venus rose from the sea near Cyprus, to which island she was wafted by the Zephyrs. The Seasons waited to welcome her on the sea-shore.

III.

And thou, my beloved one — thou,
As I gaze on thy soft eyes now,
Methinks from their depths I view
The Holy Birth born anew;
Thy lids are the gentle cell
Where the young Love blushing lies:
See! she breaks from the mystic shell,
She comes from thy tender eyes!
Hail! all hail!
She comes, as she came from the sea,
To my soul as it looks on thee;
She comes, she comes!
She comes, as she came from the sea,
To my soul as it looks on thee!
Hail! all hail!

CHAPTER III.

THE CONGREGATION.

Followed by Apæcides, the Nazarene gained the side of the Sarnus. That river, which now has shrunk into a petty stream, then rushed gayly into the sea, covered with countless vessels, and reflecting on its waves the gardens, the vines, the palaces, and the temples of Pompeii. From its more noisy and frequented banks Olinthus directed his steps to a path which ran amidst a shady vista of trees, at the distance of a few paces from the river. This walk was in the evening a favorite resort of the Pompeians, but during the heat and business of the day was seldom visited, save by some groups of playful children, some meditative poet, or some disputative philosophers. At the side farthest from the river, frequent copses of box interspersed the more delicate and evanescent foliage, and these were cut into a thousand quaint shapes, sometimes into the forms of fauns and satyrs, sometimes into the mimicry of Egyptian pyramids, sometimes into the letters that composed the name of a popular or eminent citizen.

Thus the false taste is equally ancient as the pure; and the retired traders of Hackney and Paddington, a century ago, were little aware, perhaps, that in their tortured yews and sculptured box, they found their models in the most polished period of Roman antiquity, in the gardens of Pompeii, and the villas of the fastidious Pliny.

This walk now, as the noonday sun shone perpendicularly through the checkered leaves, was entirely deserted; at least, no other forms than those of Olinthus and the priest infringed upon the solitude. They sat themselves on one of the benches, placed at intervals between the trees, and facing the faint breeze that came languidly from the river, whose waves danced and sparkled before them, — a singular and contrasted pair; the believer in the latest, the priest of the most ancient, worship of the world.

"Since thou leftst me so abruptly," said Olinthus, "hast thou been happy? Has thy heart found contentment under these priestly robes? Hast thou, still yearning for the voice of God, heard it whisper comfort to thee from the oracles of Isis? That sigh, that averted countenance, give me the answer my soul predicted."

"Alas!" answered Apæcides, sadly, "thou seest before thee a wretched and distracted man. From my childhood upward I have idolized the dreams of virtue. I have envied the holiness of men who, in caves and lonely temples, have been admitted to the companionship of beings above the world; my days have been consumed with feverish and vague desires, my nights with mocking but solemn visions. Seduced by the mystic prophecies of an impostor, I have indued these robes: my nature (I confess it to thee frankly) — my nature has revolted at what I have seen and been doomed to share in. Searching after truth, I have become but the minister of falsehoods. On the evening in which we last met, I was buoyed by hopes created by that same impostor, whom I ought already to have better known. I have — no matter, no matter! suffice it, I have added perjury and sin to rashness and to sorrow. The veil is now rent forever from my eyes; I behold a villain where I obeyed a demigod; the earth darkens in my sight; I

am in the deepest abyss of gloom; I know not if there be gods above; if we are the things of chance; if beyond the bounded and melancholy present there is annihilation or an hereafter: tell me, then, thy faith; solve me these doubts, if thou hast indeed the power."

"I do not marvel," answered the Nazarene, "that thou hast thus erred, or that thou art thus sceptic. Eighty years ago there was no assurance to man of God, or of a certain and definite future beyond the grave. New laws are declared to him who has ears; a heaven, a true Olympus, is revealed to him who has eyes; heed, then, and listen."

And with all the earnestness of a man believing ardently himself, and zealous to convert, the Nazarene poured forth to Apæcides the assurances of Scriptural promise. He spoke first of the sufferings and miracles of Christ; he wept as he spoke: he turned next to the glories of the Saviour's ascension, — to the clear predictions of Revelation. He described that pure and unsensual heaven destined to the virtuous, — those fires and torments that were the doom of guilt.

The doubts which spring up to the mind of later reasoners, in the immensity of the sacrifice of God to man, were not such as would occur to an early heathen. He had been accustomed to believe that the gods had lived upon earth, and taken upon themselves the forms of men; had shared in human passions, in human labors, and in human misfortunes. What was the travail of his own Alcmena's son, whose altars now smoked with the incense of countless cities, but a toil for the human race? Had not the great Dorian Apollo expiated a mystic sin by descending to the grave? Those who were the deities of heaven had been the lawgivers or benefactors on earth, and gratitude had led to worship. It seemed therefore to the heathen a doctrine neither new nor strange that Christ had been sent from heaven, that an immortal had indued mortality, and tasted the bitterness of death. And the end for which He thus toiled and thus suffered, — how far more glorious did it seem to Apæcides than that for which the deities of old had visited the nether world, and passed through the gates of death! Was it not worthy of a God to descend to these dim

valleys, in order to clear up the clouds gathered over the dark mount beyond; to satisfy the doubts of sages; to convert speculation into certainty; by example to point out the rules of life; by revelation to solve the enigma of the grave; and to prove that the soul did not yearn in vain when it dreamed of an immortality? In this last was the great argument of those lowly men destined to convert the earth. As nothing is more flattering to the pride and the hopes of man than the belief in a future state, so nothing could be more vague and confused than the notions of the heathen sages upon that mystic subject. Apæcides had already learned that the faith of the philosophers was not that of the herd; that if they secretly professed a creed in some diviner power, it was not the creed which they thought it wise to impart to the community. He had already learned that even the priest ridiculed what he preached to the people; that the notions of the few and the many were never united. But in this new faith it seemed to him that philosopher, priest, and people, the expounders of the religion and its followers, were alike accordant: they did not speculate and debate upon immortality, they spoke of it as a thing certain and assured; the magnificence of the promise dazzled him; its consolations soothed. For the Christian faith made its early converts among sinners; many of its fathers and its martyrs were those who had felt the bitterness of vice, and who were therefore no longer tempted by its false aspect from the paths of an austere and uncompromising virtue. All the assurances of this healing faith invited to repentance; they were peculiarly adapted to the bruised and sore of spirit; the very remorse which Apæcides felt for his late excesses made him incline to one who found holiness in that remorse, and who whispered of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

"Come," said the Nazarene, as he perceived the effect he had produced, "come to the humble hall in which we meet, — a select and a chosen few; listen there to our prayers; note the sincerity of our repentant tears; mingle in our simple sacrifice, — not of victims, nor of garlands, but offered by white-robed thoughts upon the altar of the heart. The flowers that we

lay there are imperishable; they bloom over us when we are no more; nay, they accompany us beyond the grave, they spring up beneath our feet in heaven, they delight us with an eternal odor; for they are of the soul; they partake of its nature: these offerings are temptations overcome and sins repented. Come, oh, come! lose not another moment; prepare already for the great, the awful journey from darkness to light, from sorrow to bliss, from corruption to immortality! This is the day of the Lord the Son, a day that we have set apart for our devotions. Though we meet usually at night, yet some among us are gathered together even now. What joy, what triumph, will be with us all, if we can bring one stray lamb into the sacred fold!"

There seemed to Apæcides, so naturally pure of heart, something ineffably generous and benign in that spirit of conversion which animated Olinthus, — a spirit that found its own bliss in the happiness of others; that sought in its wide sociality to make companions for eternity. He was touched, softened, and subdued. He was not in that mood which can bear to be left alone; curiosity, too, mingled with his purer stimulants; he was anxious to see those rites of which so many dark and contradictory rumors were afloat. He paused a moment, looked over his garb, thought of Arbaces, shuddered with horror, lifted his eyes to the broad brow of the Nazarene, intent, anxious, watchful, — but for *his* benefit, for his salvation! He drew his cloak round him, so as wholly to conceal his robes, and said, "Lead on; I follow thee."

Olinthus pressed his hand joyfully, and then descending to the river side, hailed one of the boats that plied there constantly; they entered it; an awning overhead, while it sheltered them from the sun, screened also their persons from observation: they rapidly skimmed the wave. From one of the boats that passed them floated a soft music, and its prow was decorated with flowers; it was gliding towards the sea.

"So," said Olinthus, sadly, "unconscious and mirthful in their delusions, sail the votaries of luxury into the great ocean of storm and shipwreck! We pass them, silent and unnoticed, to gain the land."

Apæcides, lifting his eyes, caught through the aperture in

the awning a glimpse of the face of one of the inmates of that gay bark: it was the face of Ione. The lovers were embarked on the excursion at which we have been made present. The priest sighed, and once more sank back upon his seat. They reached the shore where, in the suburbs, an alley of small and mean houses stretched towards the bank; they dismissed the boat, landed, and Olinthus, preceding the priest, threaded the labyrinth of lanes, and arrived at last at the closed door of a habitation somewhat larger than its neighbors. He knocked thrice: the door was opened and closed again, as Apæcides followed his guide across the threshold.

They passed a deserted atrium, and gained an inner chamber of moderate size, which, when the door was closed, received its only light from a small window cut over the door itself. But, halting at the threshold of this chamber, and knocking at the door, Olinthus said, "Peace be with you!" A voice from within returned, "Peace with whom?" "The Faithful!" answered Olinthus, and the door opened; twelve or fourteen persons were sitting in a semicircle, silent, and seemingly absorbed in thought, and opposite to a crucifix rudely carved in wood.

They lifted up their eyes when Olinthus entered, without speaking; the Nazarene himself, before he accosted them, knelt suddenly down, and by his moving lips, and his eyes fixed steadfastly on the crucifix, Apæcides saw that he prayed inly. This rite performed, Olinthus turned to the congregation. "Men and brethren," said he, "start not to behold amongst you a priest of Isis: he hath sojourned with the blind, but the Spirit hath fallen on him; he desires to see, to hear, and to understand."

"Let him," said one of the assembly; and Apæcides beheld in the speaker a man still younger than himself, of a countenance equally worn and pallid, of an eye which equally spoke of the restless and fiery operations of a working mind.

"Let him," repeated a second voice; and he who thus spoke was in the prime of manhood. His bronzed skin and Asiatic features bespoke him a son of Syria: he had been a robber in his youth.

"Let him," said a third voice; and the priest, again turning to regard the speaker, saw an old man with a long gray beard whom he recognized as a slave to the wealthy Diomed.

"Let him," repeated simultaneously the rest, — men who, with two exceptions, were evidently of the inferior ranks. In these exceptions, Apæcides noted an officer of the guard and an Alexandrian merchant.

"We do not," recommenced Olinthus, "we do not bind you to secrecy; we impose on you no oaths (as some of our weaker brethren would do) not to betray us. It is true, indeed, that there is no absolute law against us; but the multitude, more savage than their rulers, thirst for our lives. So, my friends, when Pilate would have hesitated, it was *the people* who shouted, 'Christ to the Cross!' But we bind you not to our safety — no! Betray us to the crowd! impeach, calumniate, malign us if you will! we are above death; we should walk cheerfully to the den of the lion or the rack of the torturer; we can trample down the darkness of the grave, and what is death to a criminal is eternity to the Christian."

A low and applauding murmur ran through the assembly.

"Thou comest amongst us as an examiner, mayest thou remain a convert! Our religion? You behold it, — yon cross our sole image, yon scroll the mysteries of our Cære and Eleusis! Our morality? It is in our lives! Sinners we all have been; who now can accuse us of a crime? We have baptized ourselves from the past. Think not that this is of us, it is of God. Approach, Medon," beckoning to the old slave who had spoken third for the admission of Apæcides, "thou art the sole man amongst us who is not free. But in heaven the last shall be first: so with us. Unfold your scroll, read, and explain."

Useless would it be for us to accompany the lecture of Medon or the comments of the congregation. Familiar now are those doctrines, then strange and new. Eighteen centuries have left us little to expound upon the lore of Scripture or the life of Christ. To us, too, there would seem little congenial in the doubts that occurred to a heathen priest, and little learned in the answers they received from men uneducated, rude, and

simple, possessing only the knowledge that they were greater than they seemed.

There was one thing that greatly touched the Neapolitan. When the lecture was concluded, they heard a very gentle knock at the door: the password was given, and replied to; the door opened, and two young children, the eldest of whom might have told its seventh year, entered timidly; they were the children of the master of the house, that dark and hardy Syrian, whose youth had been spent in pillage and bloodshed. The eldest of the congregation (it was that old slave) opened to them his arms; they fled to the shelter, they crept to his breast, and his hard features smiled as he caressed them. And then these bold and fervent men, nursed in vicissitude, beaten by the rough winds of life, — men of mailed and impervious fortitude, ready to affront a world, prepared for torment and armed for death, — men who presented all imaginable contrast to the weak nerves, the light hearts, the tender fragility of childhood, crowded round the infants, smoothing their rugged brows and composing their bearded lips to kindly and fostering smiles; and then the old man opened the scroll, and he taught the infants to repeat after him that beautiful prayer which we still dedicate to the Lord and still teach to our children; and then he told them in simple phrase, of God's love to the young, and how not a sparrow falls but His eye sees it. This lovely custom of infant initiation was long cherished by the early Church, in memory of the words which said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" and was perhaps the origin of the superstitious calumny which ascribed to the Nazarenes the crime which the Nazarene, when victorious, attributed to the Jew; namely, the decoying children to hideous rites, at which they were secretly immolated.

And the stern paternal penitent seemed to feel in the innocence of his children a return into early life, — life ere yet it sinned: he followed the motion of their young lips with an earnest gaze; he smiled as they repeated, with hushed and reverent looks, the holy words; and when the lesson was done, and they ran, released, and gladly to his knee, he clasped them to his breast, kissed them again and again, and tears flowed

fast down his cheek, — tears, of which it would have been impossible to trace the source, so mingled they were with joy and sorrow, penitence and hate, — remorse for himself and love for them!

Something, I say, there was in this scene which peculiarly affected Apæcides; and, in truth, it is difficult to conceive a ceremony more appropriate to the religion of benevolence, more appealing to the household and every-day affections, striking a more sensitive chord in the human breast.

It was at this time that an inner door opened gently, and a very old man entered the chamber, leaning on a staff. At his presence the whole congregation rose; there was an expression of deep, affectionate respect upon every countenance; and Apæcides, gazing on his countenance, felt attracted towards him by an irresistible sympathy. No man ever looked upon that face without love; for there had dwelt the smile of the Deity, the incarnation of divinest love: and the glory of the smile had never passed away.

"My children, God be with you!" said the old man, stretching his arms; and as he spoke the infants ran to his knee. He sat down, and they nestled fondly to his bosom. It was beautiful to see that mingling of the extremes of life, — the rivers gushing from their early source, the majestic stream gliding to the ocean of eternity! As the light of declining day seems to mingle earth and heaven, making the outline of each scarce visible, and blending the harsh mountain-tops with the sky, even so did the smile of that benign old age appear to hallow the aspect of those around, to blend together the strong distinctions of varying years, and to diffuse over infancy and manhood the light of that heaven into which it must so soon vanish and be lost.

"Father," said Olinthus, "thou on whose form the miracle of the Redeemer worked, thou who wert snatched from the grave to become the living witness of His mercy and His power, behold! a stranger in our meeting, — a new lamb gathered to the fold!"

"Let me bless him," said the old man: the throng gave way. Apæcides approached him as by an instinct: he fell on his

knees before him; the old man laid his hand on the priest's head, and blessed him, but not aloud. As his lips moved, his eyes were upturned, and tears — those tears that good men only shed in the hope of happiness to another — flowed fast down his cheeks.

The children were on either side of the convert; his heart was theirs; he had become as one of them, to enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STREAM OF LOVE RUNS ON, — WHITHER?

Days are like years in the love of the young, when no bar, no obstacle, is between their hearts; when the sun shines, and the course runs smooth; when their love is prosperous and confessed. Ione no longer concealed from Glaucus the attachment she felt for him, and their talk now was only of their love. Over the rapture of the present the hopes of the future glowed like the heaven above the gardens of spring. They went in their trustful thoughts far down the stream of time; they laid out the chart of their destiny to come; they suffered the light of to-day to suffuse the morrow. In the youth of their hearts it seemed as if care, and change, and death were as things unknown. Perhaps they loved each other the more because the condition of the world left to Glaucus no aim and no wish but love; because the distractions common in free States to men's affections existed not for the Athenian; because his country wooed him not to the bustle of civil life; because ambition furnished no counterpoise to love: and therefore over their schemes and their projects love only reigned. In the iron age they imagined themselves of the golden, doomed only to live and to love.

To the superficial observer, who interests himself only in characters strongly marked and broadly colored, both the lovers may seem of too slight and commonplace a mould: in the delineation of characters purposely subdued, the reader some-

times imagines that there is a want of character; perhaps, indeed, I wrong the real nature of these two lovers by not painting more impressively their stronger individualities. But in dwelling so much on their bright and birdlike existence I am influenced almost insensibly by the forethought of the changes that await them, and for which they were so ill-prepared. It was this very softness and gayety of life that contrasted most strongly the vicissitudes of their coming fate. For the oak without fruit or blossom, whose hard and rugged heart is fitted for the storm, there is less fear than for the delicate branches of the myrtle and the laughing clusters of the vine.

They had now advanced far into August; the next month their marriage was fixed, and the threshold of Glaucus was already wreathed with garlands; and nightly by the door of Ione he poured forth the rich libations. He existed no longer for his gay companions; he was ever with Ione. In the mornings they beguiled the sun with music: in the evenings they forsook the crowded haunts of the gay for excursions on the water, or along the fertile and vine-clad plains that lay beneath the fatal mount of Vesuvius. The earth shook no more; the lively Pompeians forgot even that there had gone forth so terrible a warning of their approaching doom. Glaucus imagined that convulsion, in the vanity of his heathen religion, an especial interposition of the gods, less in behalf of his own safety than that of Ione. He offered up the sacrifices of gratitude at the temples of his faith, and even the altar of Isis was covered with his votive garlands; as to the prodigy of the animated marble, he blushed at the effect it had produced on him. He believed it, indeed, to have been wrought by the magic of man; but the result convinced him that it betokened not the anger of a goddess.

Of Arbaces, they heard only that he still lived: stretched on the bed of suffering, he recovered slowly from the effect of the shock he had sustained; he left the lovers unmolested, but it was only to brood over the hour and the method of revenge.

Alike in their mornings at the house of Ione, and in their evening excursions, Nydia was usually their constant, and

often their sole companion. They did not guess the secret fires which consumed her: the abrupt freedom with which she mingled in their conversation, her capricious and often her peevish moods found ready indulgence in the recollection of the service they owed her, and their compassion for her affliction. They felt an interest in her, perhaps the greater and more affectionate from the very strangeness and waywardness of her nature, her singular alternations of passion and softness, the mixture of ignorance and genius, of delicacy and rudeness, of the quick humors of the child and the proud calmness of the woman. Although she refused to accept of freedom, she was constantly suffered to be free; she went where she listed: no curb was put either on her words or actions; they felt for one so darkly fated, and so susceptible of every wound, the same pitying and compliant indulgence the mother feels for a spoiled and sickly child, dreading to impose authority, even where they imagined it for her benefit. She availed herself of this license by refusing the companionship of the slave whom they wished to attend her. With the slender staff by which she guided her steps, she went now, as in her former unprotected state, along the populous streets; it was almost miraculous to perceive how quickly and how dexterously she threaded every crowd, avoiding every danger, and could find her benighted way through the most intricate windings of the city. But her chief delight was still in visiting the few feet of ground which made the garden of Glaucus, — in tending the flowers that at least repaid her love. Sometimes she entered the chamber where he sat, and sought a conversation, which she nearly always broke off abruptly, for conversation with Glaucus only tended to one subject, *Ione;* and that name from his lips inflicted agony upon her. Often she bitterly repented the service she had rendered to Ione; often she said inly, "If she had fallen, Glaucus could have loved her no longer;" and then dark and fearful thoughts crept into her breast.

She had not experienced fully the trials that were in store for her when she had been thus generous. She had never before been present when Glaucus and Ione were together;

she had never heard that voice so kind to her, so much softer to another. The shock that crushed her heart with the tidings that Glaucus loved, had at first only saddened and benumbed. By degrees jealousy took a wilder and fiercer shape: it partook of hatred; it whispered revenge. As you see the wind only agitate the green leaf upon the bough, while the leaf which has lain withered and seared on the ground, bruised and trampled upon till the sap and life are gone, is suddenly whirled aloft, now here, now there, without stay and without rest, so the love which visits the happy and the hopeful hath but freshness on its wings: its violence is but sportive. But the heart that hath fallen from the green things of life, that is without hope, that hath no summer in its fibres, is torn and whirled by the same wind that but caresses its brethren; it hath no bough to cling to; it is dashed from path to path, till the winds fall, and it is crushed into the mire forever.

The friendless childhood of Nydia had hardened prematurely her character; perhaps the heated scenes of profligacy through which she had passed, seemingly unscathed, had ripened her passions, though they had not sullied her purity. The orgies of Burbo might only have disgusted, the banquets of the Egyptian might only have terrified, at the moment; but the winds that pass unheeded over the soil leave seeds behind them. As darkness, too, favors the imagination, so, perhaps, her very blindness contributed to feed with wild and delirious visions the love of the unfortunate girl. The voice of Glaucus had been the first that had sounded musically to her ear; his kindness made a deep impression upon her mind; when he had left Pompeii in the former year, she had treasured up in her heart every word he had uttered; and when any one told her that this friend and patron of the poor flower-girl was the most brilliant and the most graceful of the young revellers of Pompeii, she had felt a pleasing pride in nursing his recollection. Even the task which she imposed upon herself, of tending his flowers, served to keep him in her mind; she associated him with all that was most charming to her impressions; and when she had refused to

express what image she fancied Ione to resemble, it was partly, perhaps, that whatever was bright and soft in nature she had already combined with the thought of Glaucus. If any of my readers ever loved at an age which they would now smile to remember, — an age in which fancy forestalled the reason, — let them say whether that love, among all its strange and complicated delicacies, was not, above all other and later passions, susceptible of jealousy? I seek not here the cause; I know that it is commonly the fact.

When Glaucus returned to Pompeii, Nydia had told another year of life; that year, with its sorrows, its loneliness, its trials, had greatly developed her mind and heart: and when the Athenian drew her unconsciously to his breast, deeming her still in soul as in years a child, when he kissed her smooth cheek, and wound his arm round her trembling frame, Nydia felt suddenly, and as by revelation, that those feelings she had long and innocently cherished were of love. Doomed to be rescued from tyranny by Glaucus, doomed to take shelter under his roof, doomed to breathe, but for so brief a time, the same air, and doomed in the first rush of a thousand happy, grateful, delicious sentiments of an overflowing heart, to hear that he loved another; to be commissioned to that other, the messenger, the minister; to feel all at once that utter nothingness which she was, which she ever must be, but which, till then, her young mind had not taught her, — that utter nothingness to him who was all to her, — what wonder that in her wild and passionate soul all the elements jarred discordant; that if love reigned over the whole, it was not the love which is born of the more sacred and soft emotions? Sometimes she dreaded only lest Glaucus should discover her secret; sometimes she felt indignant that it was *not* suspected; it was a sign of contempt; could he imagine that she presumed so far? Her feelings to Ione ebbed and flowed with every hour: now she loved her because *he* did; now she hated her for the same cause. There were moments when she could have murdered her unconscious mistress; moments when she could have laid down life for her. These fierce and tremulous alternations of passion were too severe to be borne long.

Her health gave way, though she felt it not; her cheek paled, her step grew feebler, tears came to her eyes more often and relieved her less.

One morning, when she repaired to her usual task in the garden of the Athenian, she found Glaucus under the columns of the peristyle, with a merchant of the town; he was selecting jewels for his destined bride. He had already fitted up her apartment; the jewels he bought that day were placed also within it; they were never fated to grace the fair form of Ione; they may be seen at this day among the disinterred treasures of Pompeii, in the chambers of the studio at Naples.[1]

"Come hither, Nydia; put down thy vase, and come hither. Thou must take this chain from me; stay; there, I have put it on. There, Servilius, does it not become her?"

"Wonderfully!" answered the jeweller; for jewellers were well-bred and flattering men, even at that day. "But when these earrings glitter in the ears of the noble Ione, *then*, by Bacchus! you will see whether my art adds anything to beauty."

"Ione?" repeated Nydia, who had hitherto acknowledged by smiles and blushes the gift of Glaucus.

"Yes," replied the Athenian, carelessly toying with the gems; "I am choosing a present for Ione, but there are none worthy of her."

He was startled as he spoke by an abrupt gesture of Nydia; she tore the chain violently from her neck, and dashed it on the ground.

"How is this? What, Nydia, dost thou not like the bauble? Art thou offended?"

"You treat me ever as a slave and as a child," replied the Thessalian, with a breast heaving with ill-suppressed sobs; and she turned hastily away to the opposite corner of the garden.

Glaucus did not attempt to follow, or to soothe; he was offended: he continued to examine the jewels and to comment on their fashion; to object to this and to praise that, and

[1] Several bracelets, chains, and jewels, were found in the house.



finally to be talked by the merchant into buying all, — the safest plan for a lover, and a plan that any one will do right to adopt, provided always that he can obtain an Ione!

When he had completed his purchase and dismissed the jeweller, he retired into his chamber, dressed, mounted his chariot, and went to Ione. He thought no more of the blind girl or her offence; he had forgotten both the one and the other.

He spent the forenoon with his beautiful Neapolitan, repaired thence to the baths, supped (if, as we have said before, we can justly so translate the three o'clock *cœna* of the Romans) alone, and abroad, for Pompeii had its restaurateurs: and returning home to change his dress ere he again repaired to the house of Ione, he passed the peristyle, but with the absorbed reverie and absent eyes of a man in love, and did not note the form of the poor blind girl, bending exactly in the same place where he had left her. But though he saw her not, her ear recognized at once the sound of his step. She had been counting the moments to his return. He had scarcely entered his favorite chamber, which opened on the peristyle, and seated himself musingly on his couch, when he felt his robe timorously touched, and turning, he beheld Nydia kneeling before him, and holding up to him a handful of flowers, — a gentle and appropriate peace-offering; her eyes, darkly upheld to his own, streamed with tears.

"I have offended thee," said she, sobbing, "and for the first time. I would die rather than cause thee a moment's pain: say that thou wilt forgive me. See! I have taken up the chain; I have put it on; I will never part from it: it is thy gift."

"My dear Nydia," returned Glaucus, and raising her, he kissed her forehead, "think of it no more! But why, my child, wert thou so suddenly angry? I could not divine the cause?"

"Do not ask!" said she, coloring violently. "I am a thing full of faults and humors; you know I am but a child; you say so often: is it from a child that you can expect a reason for every folly?"

"But, prettiest, you will soon be a child no more; and if

you would have us treat you as a woman you must learn to govern these singular impulses and gales of passion. Think not I chide: no, it is for your happiness only I speak."

"It is true," said Nydia, "I must learn to govern myself. I must hide, I must suppress, my heart. This is a woman's task and duty; methinks her virtue is hypocrisy."

"Self-control is not deceit, my Nydia," returned the Athenian; "and that is the virtue necessary alike to man and to woman; it is the true senatorial toga, the badge of the dignity it covers."

"Self-control! self-control! Well, well, what you say is right! When I listen to you, Glaucus, my wildest thoughts grow calm and sweet, and a delicious serenity falls over me. Advise, ah, guide me ever, my preserver!"

"Thy affectionate heart will be thy best guide, Nydia, when thou hast learned to regulate its feelings."

"Ah! that will be never," sighed Nydia, wiping away her tears.

"Say not so: the first effort is the only difficult one."

"I have made many first efforts," answered Nydia, innocently. "But you, my Mentor, do you find it so easy to control yourself? Can you conceal, can you even regulate your love for Ione?"

"Love! dear Nydia: ah! that is quite another matter," answered the young preceptor.

"I thought so," returned Nydia, with a melancholy smile. "Glaucus, wilt thou take my poor flowers? Do with them as thou wilt: thou canst give them to Ione," added she, with a little hesitation.

"Nay, Nydia," answered Glaucus, kindly, divining something of jealousy in her language, though he imagined it only the jealousy of a vain and susceptible child, "I will not give thy pretty flowers to any one. Sit here and weave them into a garland; I will wear it this night: it is not the first those delicate fingers have woven for me."

The poor girl delightedly sat down beside Glaucus. She drew from her girdle a ball of the many-colored threads, or rather slender ribbons, used in the weaving of garlands, and

which (for it was her professional occupation) she carried constantly with her, and began quickly and gracefully to commence her task. Upon her young cheeks the tears were already dried; a faint but happy smile played round her lips; childlike, indeed, she was sensible only of the joy of the present; she was reconciled to Glaucus; he had forgiven her; she was beside him; he played caressingly with her silken hair; his breath fanned her cheek; Ione, the cruel Ione, was not by; none other demanded, divided, his care. Yes, she was happy and forgetful; it was one of the few moments in her brief and troubled life that it was sweet to treasure, to recall. As the butterfly, allured by the winter sun, basks for a little while in the sudden light ere yet the wind awakes and the frost comes on, which shall blast it before the eve, she rested beneath a beam, which, by contrast with the wonted skies, was not chilling; and the instinct which should have warned her of its briefness, bade her only gladden in its smile.

"Thou hast beautiful locks," said Glaucus. "They were once, I ween well, a mother's delight."

Nydia sighed; it would seem that she had not been born a slave; but she ever shunned the mention of her parentage, and, whether obscure or noble, certain it is that her birth was never known by her benefactors, nor by any one in those distant shores, even to the last. The child of sorrow and of mystery, she came and went as some bird that enters our chamber for a moment; we see it flutter for a while before us: we know not whence it flew or to what region it escapes.

Nydia sighed, and after a short pause, without answering the remark, said, —

"But do I weave too many roses in my wreath, Glaucus? They tell me it is thy favorite flower."

"And ever favored, my Nydia, be it by those who have the soul of poetry: it is the flower of love, of festivals; it is also the flower we dedicate to silence and to death; it blooms on our brows in life, while life be worth the having; it is scattered above our sepulchre when we are no more."

"Ah! would," said Nydia, "instead of this perishable

wreath, that I could take thy web from the hand of the Fates, and insert the roses *there!*"

"Pretty one! thy wish is worthy of a voice so attuned to song: it is uttered in the spirit of song; and, whatever my doom, I thank thee."

"Whatever thy doom! Is it not already destined to all things bright and fair? My wish was vain. The Fates will be as tender to thee as I should."

"It might not be so, Nydia, were it not for love! While youth lasts, I may forget my country for a while. But what Athenian, in his graver manhood, can think of Athens as she was, and be contented that *he* is happy, while *she* is fallen, — fallen, and forever?"

"And why forever?"

"As ashes cannot be rekindled, as love once dead can never revive, so freedom departed from a people is never regained. But talk we not of these matters unsuited to thee."

"To me! oh, thou errest! I, too, have my sighs for Greece; my cradle was rocked at the foot of Olympus; the gods have left the mountain, but their traces may be seen, — seen in the hearts of their worshippers, seen in the beauty of their clime; they tell me it *is* beautiful, and *I* have felt its airs, to which even these are harsh, — its sun, to which these skies are chill. Oh, talk to me of Greece! Poor fool that I am, I can comprehend thee! and methinks, had I yet lingered on those shores, had I been a Grecian maid whose happy fate it was to love and to be loved, I myself could have armed my lover for another Marathon, a new Platæa. Yes, the hand that now weaves the roses should have woven thee the olive crown!"

"If such a day could come!" said Glaucus, catching the enthusiasm of the blind Thessalian, and half rising. "But no! The sun has set, and the night only bids us be forgetful, and in forgetfulness be gay: weave still the roses!"

But it was with a melancholy tone of forced gayety that the Athenian uttered the last words: and sinking into a gloomy reverie, he was only wakened from it, a few minutes afterwards, by the voice of Nydia, as she sang in a low tone the following words, which he had once taught her: —

THE APOLOGY FOR PLEASURE.

I.

Who will assume the bays
 That the hero wore?
Wreaths on the Tomb of Days
 Gone evermore!
Who shall disturb the brave,
Or one leaf on their holy grave?
The laurel is vowed to them,
Leave the bay on its sacred stem!
 But this, the rose, the fading rose,
 Alike for slave and freeman grows.

II.

If Memory sit beside the dead
 With tombs her only treasure;
If Hope is lost and Freedom fled,
 The more excuse for Pleasure.
Come, weave the wreath, the roses weave,
 The rose at least is ours:
To feeble hearts our fathers leave,
 In pitying scorn the flowers!

III.

 On the summit worn and hoary,
Of Phyle's solemn hill,
The tramp of the brave is still!
And still in the saddening Mart,
The pulse of that mighty heart,
 Whose very blood was glory!
Glaucopis forsakes her own,
 The angry gods forget us;
But yet, the blue streams along,
Walk the feet of the silver Song;
And the night-bird wakes the moon;
And the bees in the blushing noon
 Haunt the heart of the old Hymettus.
We are fallen, but not forlorn,
 If something is left to cherish;
As Love was the earliest born,
 So Love is the last to perish.

IV.

Wreathe then the roses, wreathe,
The BEAUTIFUL still is ours;
While the stream shall flow and the sky shall glow,
The BEAUTIFUL still is ours!
Whatever is fair, or soft, or bright,
In the lap of day or the arms of night,
Whispers our soul of Greece — of Greece,
And hushes our care with a voice of peace.
Wreathe then the roses, wreathe!
They tell me of earlier hours;
And I hear the heart of my country breathe
From the lips of the stranger's flowers.

CHAPTER V.

NYDIA ENCOUNTERS JULIA. — INTERVIEW OF THE HEATHEN SISTER AND CONVERTED BROTHER. — AN ATHENIAN'S NOTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

"WHAT happiness to Ione! what bliss to be ever by the side of Glaucus, to hear his voice! And *she* too can see him!"

Such was the soliloquy of the blind girl, as she walked alone and at twilight to the house of her new mistress, whither Glaucus had already preceded her. Suddenly she was interrupted in her fond thoughts by a female voice.

"Blind flower-girl, whither goest thou? There is no pannier under thine arm; hast thou sold all thy flowers?"

The person thus accosting Nydia was a lady of a handsome but a bold and unmaidenly countenance: it was Julia, the daughter of Diomed. Her veil was half raised as she spoke; she was accompanied by Diomed himself, and by a slave carrying a lantern before them: the merchant and his daughter were returning home from a supper at one of their neighbors'.

"Dost thou not remember my voice?" continued Julia. "I am the daughter of Diomed the wealthy."

"Ah! forgive me; yes, I recall the tones of your voice. No, noble Julia, I have no flowers to sell."

"I heard that thou wert purchased by the beautiful Greek, Glaucus; is that true, pretty slave?" asked Julia.

"I serve the Neapolitan, Ione," replied Nydia, evasively.

"Ah! and it is true, then —"

"Come, come!" interrupted Diomed, with his cloak up to his mouth, "the night grows cold; I cannot stay here while you prate to that blind girl. Come, let her follow you home, if you wish to speak to her."

"Do, child," said Julia, with the air of one not accustomed to be refused; "I have much to ask of thee: come."

"I cannot this night, it grows late," answered Nydia. "I must be at home; I am not free, noble Julia."

"What, the meek Ione will chide thee? Ay, I doubt not she is a second Thalestris. But come, then, to-morrow, do. Remember, I have been thy friend of old."

"I will obey thy wishes," answered Nydia; and Diomed again impatiently summoned his daughter. She was obliged to proceed, with the main question she had desired to put to Nydia unasked.

Meanwhile we return to Ione. The interval of time that had elapsed that day between the first and second visit of Glaucus had not been too gayly spent. She had received a visit from her brother. Since the night he had assisted in saving her from the Egyptian, she had not before seen him.

Occupied with his own thoughts, — thoughts of so serious and intense a nature, — the young priest had thought little of his sister; in truth, men perhaps of that fervent order of mind which is ever aspiring *above* earth, are but little prone to the earthlier affections; and it had been long since Apæcides had sought those soft and friendly interchanges of thought, those sweet confidences which in his earlier youth had bound him to Ione, and which are so natural to that endearing connection which existed between them.

Ione, however, had not ceased to regret his estrangement. She attributed it at present to the engrossing duties of his

severe fraternity. And often, amidst all her bright hopes, and her new attachment to her betrothed, — often, when she thought of her brother's brow prematurely furrowed, his unsmiling lip and bended frame, — she sighed to think that the service of the gods could throw so deep a shadow over that earth which the gods created.

But this day when he visited her there was a strange calmness on his features, a more quiet and self-possessed expression in his sunken eyes, than she had marked for years. This apparent improvement was but momentary; it was a false calm, which the least breeze could ruffle.

"May the gods bless thee, my brother!" said she, embracing him.

"The gods! Speak not thus vaguely; perchance there is but *one* God!"

"My brother!"

"What if the sublime faith of the Nazarene be true? What if God be a monarch, — One, Invisible, Alone? What if these numerous, countless deities, whose altars fill the earth, be but evil demons, seeking to wean us from the true creed? This may be the case, Ione!"

"Alas! can we believe it; or if we believed, would it not be a melancholy faith?" answered the Neapolitan. "What! all this beautiful world made only human, the mountain disenchanted of its Oread, the waters of their Nymph, that beautiful prodigality of faith which makes everything divine, consecrating the meanest flowers, bearing celestial whispers in the faintest breeze, — wouldst thou deny this, and make the earth mere dust and clay? No, Apæcides; all that is brightest in our hearts is that very credulity which peoples the universe with gods."

Ione answered as a believer in the poesy of the old mythology would answer. We may judge by that reply how obstinate and hard the contest which Christianity had to endure among the heathens. The Graceful Superstition was never silent; every, the most household, action of their lives was entwined with it; it was a portion of life itself, as the flowers are a part of the thyrsus. At every incident they recurred to

a god; every cup of wine was prefaced by a libation; the very garlands on their thresholds were dedicated to some divinity; their ancestors themselves, made holy, presided as Lares over their hearth and hall. So abundant was belief with them, that in their own climes at this hour idolatry has never thoroughly been outrooted. It changes but its objects of worship; it appeals to innumerable saints where once it resorted to divinities; and it pours its crowds, in listening reverence, to oracles at the shrines of Saint Januarius or Saint Stephen instead of to those of Isis or Apollo.

But these superstitions were not to the early Christians the object of contempt so much as of horror. They did not believe, with the quiet scepticism of the heathen philosopher, that the gods were inventions of the priests; nor even, with the vulgar, that, according to the dim light of history, they had been mortals like themselves. They imagined the heathen divinities to be evil spirits; they transplanted to Italy and to Greece the gloomy demons of India and the East; and in Jupiter or in Mars they shuddered at the representative of Moloch or of Satan.[1]

Apæcides had not yet adopted formally the Christian faith, but he was already on the brink of it. He already participated the doctrines of Olinthus; he already imagined that the lively imaginations of the heathen were the suggestions of the arch-enemy of mankind. The innocent and natural answer of Ione made him shudder. He hastened to reply vehemently, and yet so confusedly, that Ione feared for his reason more than she dreaded his violence.

"Ah, my brother!" said she, "these hard duties of thine have shattered thy very sense! Come to me, Apæcides, my brother, my own brother; give me thy hand, let me wipe the

[1] In Pompeii a rough sketch of Pluto delineates that fearful deity in the shape we at present ascribe to the devil, and decorates him with the paraphernalia of horns and a tail. But in all probability it was from the mysterious Pan, the haunter of solitary places, the inspirer of vague and soul-shaking terrors, that we took the vulgar notion of the outward likeness of the fiend; it corresponds exactly to the cloven-footed Satan. And in the lewd and profligate rites of Pan, Christians might well imagine they traced the deceptions of the devil.

dew from thy brow; chide me not now, I understand thee not; think only that Ione could not offend thee!"

"Ione," said Apæcides, drawing her towards him, and regarding her tenderly, "can I think that this beautiful form, this kind heart, may be destined to an eternity of torment?"

"*Dii meliora!* [the gods forbid!]" said Ione, in the customary form of words by which her contemporaries thought an omen might be averted.

The words, and still more the superstition they implied, wounded the ear of Apæcides. He rose, muttering to himself, turned from the chamber, then, stopping half-way, gazed wistfully on Ione and extended his arms.

Ione flew to them in joy; he kissed her earnestly, and then he said, —

"Farewell, my sister! When we next meet, thou mayst be to me as nothing; take thou, then, this embrace, — full yet of all the tender reminiscences of childhood, when faith and hope, creeds, customs, interests, objects, were the same to us. Now the tie is to be broken!"

With these strange words he left the house.

The great and severest trial of the primitive Christians was indeed this: their conversion separated them from their dearest bonds. They could not associate with beings whose commonest actions, whose commonest forms of speech, were impregnated with idolatry. They shuddered at the blessing of love; to their ears it was uttered in a demon's name. This, their misfortune, was their strength; if it divided them from the rest of the world, it was to unite them proportionally to each other. They were men of iron, who wrought forth the Word of God, and verily the bonds that bound them were of iron also.

Glaucus found Ione in tears; he had already assumed the sweet privilege to console. He drew from her a recital of her interview with her brother; but in her confused account of language, itself so confused to one not prepared for it, he was equally at a loss with Ione to conceive the intentions or the meaning of Apæcides.

"Hast thou ever heard much," asked she, "of this new sect of the Nazarenes of which my brother spoke?"

"I have often heard enough of the votaries," returned Glaucus; "but of their exact tenets know I naught, save that in their doctrine there seemeth something preternaturally chilling and morose. They live apart from their kind; they affect to be shocked even at our simple uses of garlands; they have no sympathies with the cheerful amusements of life; they utter awful threats of the coming destruction of the world; they appear, in one word, to have brought their unsmiling and gloomy creed out of the cave of Trophonius. Yet," continued Glaucus, after a slight pause, "they have not wanted men of great power and genius, nor converts, even among the Areopagites of Athens. Well do I remember to have heard my father speak of one strange guest at Athens, many years ago; methinks his name was PAUL. My father was amongst a mighty crowd that gathered on one of our immemorial hills to hear this sage of the East expound; through the wide throng there rang not a single murmur; the jest and the roar, with which our native orators are received, were hushed for him; and when, on the loftiest summit of that hill, raised above the breathless crowd below, stood this mysterious visitor, his mien and his countenance awed every heart, even before a sound left his lips. He was a man, I have heard my father say, of no tall stature, but of noble and impressive mien; his robes were dark and ample; the declining sun — for it was evening — shone aslant upon his form as it rose aloft, motionless and commanding; his countenance was much worn and marked, as of one who had braved alike misfortune and the sternest vicissitude of many climes; but his eyes were bright with an almost unearthly fire; and when he raised his arm to speak, it was with the majesty of a man into whom the spirit of a god hath rushed.

"'Men of Athens,' he is reported to have said, 'I find amongst ye an altar with this inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD. Ye worship in ignorance the same Deity I serve. To you *unknown* till now, to you be it now revealed.'

"Then declared that solemn man how this great Maker of

all things, who had appointed unto man his several tribes and his various homes, the Lord of earth and the universal heaven, dwelt not in temples made with hands; that His presence, His spirit, were in the air we breathed; our life and our being were with Him. 'Think you,' he cried, 'that the Invisible is like your statues of gold and marble? Think you that He needeth sacrifice from you, — He who made heaven and earth?' Then spake he of fearful and coming times, of the end of the world, of a second rising of the dead, whereof an assurance had been given to man in the resurrection of the mighty Being whose religion he came to preach.

"When he thus spoke, the long-pent murmur went forth, and the philosophers that were mingled with the people muttered their sage contempt; there might you have seen the chilling frown of the Stoic and the Cynic's sneer;[1] and the Epicurean, who believeth not even in our own Elysium, muttered a pleasant jest, and swept laughing through the crowd: but the deep heart of the people was touched and thrilled; and they trembled, though they knew not why, for verily the stranger had the voice and majesty of a man to whom 'the Unknown God' had committed the preaching of His faith."

Ione listened with rapt attention, and the serious and earnest manner of the narrator betrayed the impression that he himself had received from one who had been amongst the audience that on the hill of the heathen Mars had heard the first tidings of the word of Christ!

[1] "The haughty Cynic scowl'd his grovelling hate,
And the soft garden's rose-encircled child
Smil'd unbelief, and shudder'd as he smil'd."
PRAED: *Prize Poem, "Athens."*



CHAPTER VI.

THE PORTER. — THE GIRL. — AND THE GLADIATOR.

THE door of Diomed's house stood open, and Medon, the old slave, sat at the bottom of the steps by which you ascended to the mansion. That luxurious mansion of the rich merchant of Pompeii is still to be seen just without the gates of the city, at the commencement of the Street of Tombs; it was a gay neighborhood, despite the dead. On the opposite side, but at some yards nearer the gate, was a spacious hostelry, at which those brought by business or by pleasure to Pompeii often stopped to refresh themselves. In the space before the entrance of the inn now stood wagons and carts and chariots, some just arrived, some just quitting, in all the bustle of an animated and popular resort of public entertainment. Before the door, some farmers, seated on a bench by a small circular table, were talking, over their morning cups, on the affairs of their calling. On the side of the door itself was painted gayly and freshly the eternal sign of the checkers.[1] By the roof of the inn stretched a terrace, on which some females, wives of the farmers above mentioned, were, some seated, some leaning over the railing, and conversing with their friends below. In a deep recess, at a little distance, was a covered seat, in which some two or three poorer travellers were resting themselves, and shaking the dust from their garments. On the other side stretched a wide space, originally the burial-ground of a more ancient race than the present denizens of Pompeii, and now converted into the Ustrinum, or place for the burning of the dead. Above this rose the terraces of a gay villa, half hid by trees. The tombs themselves, with their graceful and varied shapes, the flowers and the foliage that surrounded them, made no melancholy feature in the prospect. Hard by the gate of the city, in a

[1] There is another inn within the walls similarly adorned.

small niche, stood the still form of the well-disciplined Roman sentry, the sun shining brightly on his polished crest, and the lance on which he leaned. The gate itself was divided into three arches, the centre one for vehicles, the others for the foot-passengers; and on either side rose the massive walls which girt the city, composed, patched, repaired at a thousand different epochs, according as war, time, or the earthquake had shattered that vain protection. At frequent intervals rose square towers, whose summits broke in picturesque rudeness the regular line of the wall, and contrasted well with the modern buildings gleaming whitely by.

The curving road, which in that direction leads from Pompeii to Herculaneum, wound out of sight amidst hanging vines, above which frowned the sullen majesty of Vesuvius.

"Hast thou heard the news, old Medon?" said a young woman, with a pitcher in her hand, as she paused by Diomed's door to gossip a moment with the slave, ere she repaired to the neighboring inn to fill the vessel, and coquet with the travellers.

"The news! What news?" said the slave, raising his eyes moodily from the ground.

"Why, there passed through the gate this morning, no doubt ere thou wert well awake, such a visitor to Pompeii!"

"Ay," said the slave, indifferently.

"Yes, a present from the noble Pomponianus."

"A present! I thought thou saidst a visitor!"

"It is both visitor and present. Know, O dull and stupid! that it is a most beautiful young tiger, for our approaching games in the amphitheatre. Hear you that, Medon? Oh, what pleasure! I declare I shall not sleep a wink till I see it; they say it has such a roar!"

"Poor fool!" said Medon, sadly and cynically.

"Fool me no fool, old churl! It is a pretty thing, a tiger, especially if we could but find somebody for him to eat. We have now a lion and a tiger: only consider that, Medon; and for want of two good criminals perhaps we shall be forced to see them eat each other. By the bye, your son is a gladiator, a handsome man and a strong; can you not persuade him to

fight the tiger? Do now; you would oblige me mightily: nay, you would be a benefactor to the whole town."

"Vah! vah!" said the slave, with great asperity; "think of thine own danger ere thou thus pratest of my poor boy's death."

"My own danger!" said the girl, frightened and looking hastily round: "avert the omen; let thy words fall on thine own head!" And the girl, as she spoke, touched a talisman suspended round her neck. "'Thine own danger!' What danger threatens me?"

"Had the earthquake but a few nights since no warning?" said Medon. "Has it not a voice? Did it not say to us all, 'Prepare for death; the end of all things is at hand'?"

"Bah, stuff!" said the young woman, settling the folds of her tunic. "Now thou talkest as they say the Nazarenes talk; methinks thou art one of them. Well, I can prate with thee, gray croaker, no more; thou growest worse and worse. *Vale!* O Hercules, send us a man for the lion, and another for the tiger!

'Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show,
With a forest of faces in every row!
Lo, the swordsmen, bold as the son of Alcmena,
Sweep, side by side, o'er the hush'd arena;
Talk while you may: you will hold your breath
When they meet in the grasp of the glowing death.
Tramp, tramp, how gayly they go!
Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show!'"

Chanting in a silver and clear voice this feminine ditty, and holding up her tunic from the dusty road, the young woman stepped lightly across to the crowded hostelry.

"My poor son!" said the slave, half aloud, "is it for things like this thou art to be butchered? O faith of Christ, I could worship thee in all sincerity, were it but for the horror which thou inspirest for these bloody lists!"

The old man's head sank dejectedly on his breast. He remained silent and absorbed, but every now and then with the corner of his sleeve he wiped his eyes. His heart was with his son; he did not see the figure that now approached from the gate with a quick step, and a somewhat fierce and reckless

gait and carriage. He did not lift his eyes till the figure paused opposite the place where he sat, and with a soft voice addressed him by the name of —

"Father!"

"My boy! my Lydon! is it indeed thou?" said the old man, joyfully. "Ah, thou wert present to my thoughts."

"I am glad to hear it, my father," said the gladiator, respectfully touching the knees and beard of the slave; "and soon may I be always present with thee, not in thought only."

"Yes, my son, but not in this world," replied the slave, mournfully.

"Talk not thus, oh, my sire! look cheerfully, for I feel so: I am sure that I shall win the day; and then, the gold I gain buys thy freedom. Oh, my father, it was but a few days since that I was taunted, by one, too, whom I would gladly have undeceived, for he is more generous than the rest of his equals. He is not Roman, he is of Athens; by him I was taunted with the lust of gain, when I demanded what sum was the prize of victory. Alas! he little knew the soul of Lydon!"

"My boy! my boy!" said the old slave, as, slowly ascending the steps, he conducted his son to his own little chamber communicating with the entrance-hall (which in this villa was the peristyle, not the atrium — you may see it now; it is the third door to the right on entering. The first door conducts to the staircase; the second is but a false recess, in which there stood a statue of bronze). "Generous, affectionate, pious as are thy motives," said Medon, when they were thus secured from observation, "thy deed itself is guilt: thou art to risk thy blood for thy father's freedom, — that might be forgiven; but the prize of victory is the blood of another. Oh, *that* is a deadly sin; no object can purify it. Forbear! forbear! rather would I be a slave forever, than purchase liberty on such terms!"

"Hush, my father!" replied Lydon, somewhat impatiently; "thou has picked up in this new creed of thine, of which I pray thee not to speak to me, for the gods that gave me

strength denied me wisdom, and I understand not one word of what thou often preachest to me, — thou hast picked up, I say, in this new creed, some singular fantasies of right and wrong. Pardon me if I offend thee: but reflect! Against whom shall I contend? Oh, couldst thou know those wretches with whom for thy sake I assort, thou wouldst think I purified earth by removing one of them! Beasts, whose very lips drop blood; things, all savage, unprincipled in their very courage; ferocious, heartless, senseless; no tie of life can bind them; they know not fear, it is true, but neither know they gratitude, nor charity, nor love; they are made but for their own career, to slaughter without pity, to die without dread! Can thy gods, whosoever they be, look with wrath on a conflict with such as these, and in such a cause? Oh, my father, wherever the powers above gaze down on earth, they behold no duty so sacred, so sanctifying, as the sacrifice offered to an aged parent by the piety of a grateful son!"

The poor old slave, himself deprived of the lights of knowledge, and only late a convert to the Christian faith, knew not with what arguments to enlighten an ignorance at once so dark and yet so beautiful in its error. His first impulse was to throw himself on his son's breast, his next to start away, to wring his hands; and in the attempt to reprove, his broken voice lost itself in weeping.

"And if," resumed Lydon, — "if thy Deity (methinks thou wilt own but one!) be indeed that benevolent and pitying Power which thou assertest Him to be, He will know also that thy very faith in Him first confirmed me in that determination thou blamest."

"How! what mean you?" said the slave.

"Why, thou knowest that I, sold in my childhood as a slave, was set free at Rome by the will of my master, whom I had been fortunate enough to please. I hastened to Pompeii to see thee; I found thee already aged and infirm, under the yoke of a capricious and pampered lord; thou hadst lately adopted this new faith, and its adoption made thy slavery doubly painful to thee; it took away all the softening charm of custom, which reconciles us so often to the worst. Didst

thou not complain to me that thou wert compelled to offices that were not odious to thee as a slave, but guilty as a Nazarene? Didst thou not tell me that thy soul shook with remorse when thou wert compelled to place even a crumb of cake before the Lares that watch over yon impluvium; that thy soul was torn by a perpetual struggle? Didst thou not tell me that even by pouring wine before the threshold, and calling on the name of some Grecian deity, thou didst fear thou wert incurring penalties worse than those of Tantalus, an eternity of tortures more terrible than those of the Tartarean fields? Didst thou not tell me this? I wondered, I could not comprehend: nor, by Hercules! can I now; but I was thy son, and my sole task was to compassionate and relieve. Could I hear thy groans, could I witness thy mysterious horrors, thy constant anguish, and remain inactive? No! by the immortal gods! the thought struck me like light from Olympus! I had no money, but I had strength and youth, — these were thy gifts: I could sell these in my turn for thee! I learned the amount of thy ransom; I learned that the usual prize of a victorious gladiator would doubly pay it. I became a gladiator; I linked myself with those accursed men, scorning, loathing, while I joined; I acquired their skill; blessed be the lesson! it shall teach me to free my father!"

"Oh, that thou couldst hear Olinthus!" sighed the old man, more and more affected by the virtue of his son, but not less strongly convinced of the criminality of his purpose.

"I will hear the whole world talk if thou wilt," answered the gladiator, gayly; "but not till thou art a slave no more. Beneath thy own roof, my father, thou shalt puzzle this dull brain all day long, ay, and all night too, if it give thee pleasure. Oh, such a spot as I have chalked out for thee! It is one of the nine hundred and ninety-nine shops of old Julia Felix, in the sunny part of the city, where thou mayst bask before the door in the day. And I will sell the oil and the wine for thee, my father, and then, please Venus (or if it does not please her, since thou lovest not her name, it is all one to Lydon), then, I say, perhaps thou mayst have a daughter, too, to tend thy

gray hairs, and hear shrill voices at thy knee that shall call thee 'Lydon's father'! Ah! we shall be so happy: the prize can purchase all. Cheer thee! cheer up, my sire! And now I must away; day wears; the lanista waits me. Come! thy blessing!"

As Lydon thus spoke, he had already quitted the dark chamber of his father; and speaking eagerly, though in a whispered tone, they now stood at the same place in which we introduced the porter at his post.

"Oh, bless thee! bless thee, my brave boy!" said Medon, fervently; "and may the great Power that reads all hearts see the nobleness of thine, and forgive its error!"

The tall shape of the gladiator passed swiftly down the path; the eyes of the slave followed its light but stately steps, till the last glimpse was gone; and then, sinking once more on his seat, his eyes again fastened themselves on the ground: his form, mute and unmoving as a thing of stone; his heart — who in our happier age can even imagine its struggles, its commotion?

"May I enter?" said a sweet voice. "Is thy mistress Julia within?"

The slave mechanically motioned to the visitor to enter, but she who addressed him could not see the gesture; she repeated her question timidly, but in a louder voice.

"Have I not told thee?" said the slave, peevishly; "enter."

"Thanks," said the speaker, plaintively; and the slave, roused by the tone, looked up, and recognized the blind flower-girl. Sorrow can sympathize with affliction: he raised himself, and guided her steps to the head of the adjacent staircase (by which you descended to Julia's apartment), where, summoning a female slave, he consigned to her the charge of the blind girl.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DRESSING-ROOM OF A POMPEIAN BEAUTY. — IMPORTANT CONVERSATION BETWEEN JULIA AND NYDIA.

THE elegant Julia sat in her chamber, with her slaves around her; like the cubiculum which adjoined it, the room was small, but much larger than the usual apartments appropriated to sleep, which were so diminutive that few who have not seen the bed-chambers, even in the gayest mansions, can form any notion of the petty pigeon-holes in which the citizens of Pompeii evidently thought it desirable to pass the night. But, in fact, "bed" with the ancients was not that grave, serious, and important part of domestic mysteries which it is with us. The couch itself was more like a very narrow and small sofa, light enough to be transported easily, and by the occupant himself,[1] from place to place; and it was no doubt constantly shifted from chamber to chamber, according to the caprices of the inmate or the changes of the season; for that side of the house which was crowded in one month, might perhaps be carefully avoided in the next. There was also among the Italians of that period a singular and fastidious apprehension of too much daylight; their darkened chambers, which first appear to us the result of a negligent architecture were the effect of the most elaborate study. In their porticos and gardens they courted the sun whenever it so pleased their luxurious tastes. In the interior of their houses they sought rather the coolness and the shade.

Julia's apartment at that season was in the lower part of the house, immediately beneath the state rooms above, and looking upon the garden, with which it was on a level. The wide door, which was glazed, alone admitted the morning rays; yet her eye, accustomed to a certain darkness, was sufficiently acute to perceive exactly what colors were the most becoming, what shade of the delicate rouge gave the brightest beam to

[1] "Take up thy bed and walk" was (as Sir W. Gell somewhere observes) no metaphorical expression.



her dark glance and the most youthful freshness to her cheek.

On the table, before which she sat, was a small and circular mirror of the most polished steel; round which, in precise order, were ranged the cosmetics and the unguents, the perfumes and the paints, the jewels and the combs, the ribbons and the gold pins, which were destined to add to the natural attractions of beauty the assistance of art and the capricious allurements of fashion. Through the dimness of the room glowed brightly the vivid and various colorings of the wall, in all the dazzling frescos of Pompeian taste. Before the dressing-table, and under the feet of Julia, was spread a carpet, woven from the looms of the East. Near at hand, on another table, was a silver basin and ewer; an extinguished lamp, of most exquisite workmanship, in which the artist had represented a Cupid reposing under the spreading branches of a myrtle-tree; and a small roll of papyrus, containing the softest elegies of Tibullus. Before the door, which communicated with the cubiculum, hung a curtain richly broidered with gold flowers. Such was the dressing-room of a beauty eighteen centuries ago.

The fair Julia leaned indolently back on her seat, while the ornatrix (that is, hairdresser) slowly piled, one above the other, a mass of small curls, dexterously weaving the false with the true, and carrying the whole fabric to a height that seemed to place the head rather at the centre than the summit of the human form.

Her tunic, of a deep amber, which well set off her dark hair and somewhat embrowned complexion, swept in ample folds to her feet, which were cased in slippers, fastened round the slender ankle by white thongs; while a profusion of pearls were embroidered in the slipper itself, which was of purple, and turned slightly upward, as do the Turkish slippers at this day. An old slave, skilled by long experience in all the arcana of the toilet, stood beside the hairdresser, with the broad and studded girdle of her mistress over her arm, and giving, from time to time (mingled with judicious flattery to the lady herself), instructions to the mason of the ascending pile.

"Put that pin rather more to the right; lower, stupid one! Do you not observe how even those beautiful eyebrows are? One would think you were dressing Corinna, whose face is all of one side. Now put in the flowers; what, fool! not that dull pink; you are not suiting colors to the dim cheek of Chloris: it must be the brightest flowers that can alone suit the cheek of the young Julia."

"Gently!" said the lady, stamping her small foot violently; "you pull my hair as if you were plucking up a weed!"

"Dull thing!" continued the directress of the ceremony. "Do you not know how delicate is your mistress? You are not dressing the coarse horsehair of the widow Fulvia. Now, then, the ribbon; that's right. Fair Julia, look in the mirror; saw you ever anything so lovely as yourself?"

When, after innumerable comments, difficulties, and delays, the intricate tower was at length completed, the next preparation was that of giving to the eyes the soft languish, produced by a dark powder applied to the lids and brows; a small patch cut in the form of a crescent, skilfully placed by the rosy lips, attracted attention to their dimples, and to the teeth, to which already every art had been applied in order to heighten the dazzle of their natural whiteness.

To another slave, hitherto idle, was now consigned the charge of arranging the jewels, — the earrings of pearl (two to each ear); the massive bracelets of gold; the chain formed of rings of the same metal, to which a talisman cut in crystals was attached; the graceful buckle on the left shoulder, in which was set an exquisite cameo of Psyche; the girdle of purple ribbon, richly wrought with threads of gold and clasped by interlacing serpents; and lastly, the various rings, fitted to every joint of the white and slender fingers. The toilet was now arranged according to the last mode of Rome. The fair Julia regarded herself with a last gaze of complacent vanity, and reclining again upon her seat, she bade the youngest of her slaves, in a listless tone, read to her the enamoured couplets of Tibullus. This lecture was still proceeding, when a female slave admitted Nydia into the presence of the lady of the place.

"*Salve*, Julia," said the flower-girl, arresting her steps within a few paces from the spot where Julia sat, and crossing her arms upon her breast. "I have obeyed your commands."

"You have done well, flower-girl," answered the lady. "Approach: you may take a seat."

One of the slaves placed a stool by Julia, and Nydia seated herself.

Julia looked hard at the Thessalian for some moments in rather an embarrassed silence. She then motioned her attendants to withdraw, and to close the door. When they were alone, she said, looking mechanically from Nydia, and forgetful that she was with one who could not observe her countenance, —

"You serve the Neapolitan, Ione?"

"I am with her at present," answered Nydia.

"Is she as handsome as they say?"

"I know not," replied Nydia. "How can *I* judge?"

"Ah! I should have remembered. But thou hast ears, if not eyes. Do thy fellow-slaves tell thee she is handsome? Slaves talking with one another forget to flatter even their mistress."

"They tell me that she is beautiful."

"Hem! Say they that she is tall?"

"Yes."

"Why, so am I. Dark-haired?"

"I have heard so."

"So am I. And doth Glaucus visit her much?"

"Daily," returned Nydia, with a half-suppressed sigh.

"Daily, indeed! Does he find her handsome?"

"I should think so, since they are so soon to be wedded."

"Wedded!" cried Julia, turning pale even through the false roses on her cheek, and starting from her couch. Nydia did not, of course, perceive the emotion she had caused. Julia remained a long time silent; but her heaving breast and flashing eyes would have betrayed, to one who *could* have seen, the wound her vanity had sustained.

"They tell me thou art a Thessalian," said she, at last breaking silence.

"And truly!"

"Thessaly is the land of magic and of witches, of talismans and of love-philtres," said Julia.

"It has ever been celebrated for its sorcerers," returned Nydia, timidly.

"Knowest thou, then, blind Thessalian, of any love-charms?"

"I!" said the flower-girl, coloring; "*I!* how should I? No, assuredly not!"

"The worse for thee; I could have given thee gold enough to have purchased thy freedom hadst thou been more wise."

"But what," asked Nydia, "can induce the beautiful and wealthy Julia to ask that question of her servant? Has she not money, and youth, and loveliness? Are *they* not love-charms enough to dispense with magic?"

"To all but one person in the world," answered Julia, haughtily; "but methinks thy blindness is infectious, and — but no matter."

"And that one person?" said Nydia, eagerly.

"Is *not* Glaucus," replied Julia, with the customary deceit of her sex. "Glaucus — no!"

Nydia drew her breath more freely, and after a short pause Julia recommenced.

"But talking of Glaucus and his attachment to this Neapolitan reminded me of the influence of love-spells, which, for aught I know or care, she may have exercised upon him. Blind girl, I love, and — shall Julia live to say it? — am loved not in return! This humbles, — nay, not *humbles*, but it *stings* my pride. I would see this ingrate at my feet; not in order that I might raise, but that I might spurn him. When they told me thou wert Thessalian, I imagined thy young mind might have learned the dark secrets of thy clime."

"Alas! no," murmured Nydia; "would it had!"

"Thanks, at least, for that kindly wish," said Julia, unconscious of what was passing in the breast of the flower-girl. "But tell me, — thou hearest the gossip of slaves, always prone to these dim beliefs, always ready to apply to sorcery for their own low loves, — hast thou ever heard of any Eastern

magician in this city, who possesses the art of which thou art ignorant? No vain chiromancer, no juggler of the market-place, but some more potent and mighty magician of India or of Egypt?"

"Of Egypt? yes!" said Nydia, shuddering. "What Pompeian has not heard of Arbaces?"

"Arbaces! true," replied Julia, grasping at the recollection. "They say he is a man above all the petty and false impostures of dull pretenders; that he is versed in the learning of the stars, and the secrets of the ancient Nox: why not in the mysteries of love?"

"If there be one magician living whose art is above that of others, it is that dread man," answered Nydia; and she felt her talisman while she spoke.

"He is too wealthy to divine for money!" continued Julia, sneeringly. "Can I not visit him?"

"It is an evil mansion for the young and the beautiful," replied Nydia. "I have heard, too, that he languishes in —"

"An evil mansion!" said Julia, catching only the first sentence. "Why so?"

"The orgies of his midnight leisure are impure and polluted; at least, so says rumor."

"By Ceres, by Pan, and by Cybele! thou dost but provoke my curiosity, instead of exciting my fears," returned the wayward and pampered Pompeian. "I will seek and question him of his lore. If to these orgies love be admitted, — why, the more likely that he knows its secrets!"

Nydia did not answer.

"I will seek him this very day," resumed Julia; "nay, why not this very hour?"

"At daylight, and in his present state, thou hast assuredly the less to fear," answered Nydia, yielding to her own sudden and secret wish to learn if the dark Egyptian were indeed possessed of those spells to rivet and attract love, of which the Thessalian had so often heard.

"And who would dare insult the rich daughter of Diomed?" said Julia, haughtily. "I will go."

"May I visit thee afterwards to learn the result?" asked Nydia, anxiously.

"Kiss me for thy interest in Julia's honor," answered the lady. "Yes, assuredly. This eve we sup abroad; come hither at the same hour to-morrow, and thou shalt know all. I may have to employ thee too; but enough for the present. Stay; take this bracelet for the new thought thou hast inspired me with: remember, if thou servest Julia, she is grateful and she is generous."

"I cannot take thy present," said Nydia, putting aside the bracelet: "but young as I am, I can sympathize unbought with those who love, and love in vain."

"Sayest thou so?" returned Julia. "Thou speakest like a free woman, and thou shalt yet be free: farewell!"

END OF VOLUME I.